

The Central American Career of E. George Squier

by Charles Lee Stansifer

M. A. and B. A., Wichita State University, 1953-54

Professor in Charge

William J. Griffith

Committee Members

William R. Hogan

Thomas L. Karnes

Charles P. Roland

THE CENTRAL AMERICAN CAREER OF E. GEORGE SQUIER

A DISSERTATION

Submitted on the 20th day of April, 1959, to
the Department of History of the Graduate School
of Tulane University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy by

Charles Lee Stansifer

Charles Lee Stansifer

APPROVED:

William J. Griffith
CHAIRMAN, William J. Griffith

William R. Hogan

Thomas L. Karnes

Charles P. Roland

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PREFACE

The significance of the Central American career of E. George Squier has long been recognized by historians. But it has been imperfectly known. The diplomatic phase of his career, of great importance to Anglo-American isthmian rivalry of the mid-nineteenth century, has received the most attention but no systematic analysis of his diplomatic mission to Central America or of its importance to the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty has heretofore been made. Squier's career as promoter of the Honduras interoceanic railway project in the 1850's has scarcely been examined by historians, though it is of the utmost importance to an understanding of Squier's interest in Central America. As a writer Squier was perhaps best known to his contemporaries. He wrote both for scholars and the public at large and was considered the leading United States authority on Central America and one of the principal archaeologists of his time. Yet no study of his writings has been published.

This study attempts to supply some of the details of the various aspects of Squier's Central American career. It focuses on Central America because, though Squier had other interests, his career centers on this region. He became interested in Central America in 1848 or 1849, while still in his twenties, and maintained his interest until 1872, when

insanity incapacitated him. Although he did not die until 1888 and was temporarily able to resume his work for brief periods until the 1880's, this study necessarily deals with the years of his active interest in Central America, from 1849 to 1872.

The manuscript materials upon which this study is based are located in four principal depositories: the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C., the New-York Historical Society in New York City, the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, and the Middle American Research Institute at Tulane University in New Orleans. Probably the most important single collection of letters to Squier is in the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress. The New-York Historical Society collection of Squier family papers was especially valuable for Squier's early life and for Squier's candid observations on all phases of his career. Letters in the Huntington Library were almost exclusively concerned with the Honduras railway project and without them it would have been impossible to unravel the details of Squier's interest in Honduras. Microfilm copies of all the above collections are conveniently located in the Middle American Research Institute, which has an important Squier collection of its own, including his own scrapbooks, reviews of his works, and reports of scientific society meetings, all of which were essential to the study of Squier as a scholar and writer. The Middle American Research Institute also has microfilm copies of Squier's diplomatic reports obtained from the National Archives and copies of almost all of his numerous publications.

To the Latin American Studies Committee of Tulane University I wish to express my gratitude for helping to finance two trips to Washington to gather research materials and for purchasing on microfilm Squier correspondence in the depositories mentioned above. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. William J. Griffith of Tulane University who has given me many hours of his time and has made innumerable valuable suggestions. Dr. Thomas L. Karnes and others in the Tulane Department of History have aided me in ways too numerous to mention. I wish also to express my appreciation to the library staff at Tulane University, especially Mrs. Edith Ricketson of the Middle American Research Institute; to Mr. Frank Squier, E. George's nephew, who has studied his uncle's career very closely and who encouraged me to complete this study; and to my wife, Mary Ellen, who has typed every word here written.

Charles Lee Stansifer

Lafayette, Louisiana, April, 1959

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CHAPTER I

ORIGINS OF A CENTRAL AMERICANIST

Biographical dictionaries usually refer to E. George Squier as a diplomat, archaeologist, and writer. He was all of these and more. In the thirty years of a very active public career--spanning roughly the period between 1840 and 1870--Squier tried numerous and varied professions, none of which fully claimed his loyalties and none of which entirely pleased him. In the early 1840's Squier was primarily a journalist, editing newspapers political and literary from Connecticut to Ohio. From journalism to politics is often but a short step; Squier tried it but advanced no further than clerk of the House of Representatives of Ohio. He had greater success as a diplomat, gaining some fame and becoming a controversial figure as chargé d'affaires in Central America in 1849 and 1850.

Probably more than anything else Squier wanted to be a scholar. He did win wide recognition as an archaeologist, specializing in the United States, Peru, and Central America, but his ambitions in this respect were restricted by the lack of independent means to carry on continuous scholarly researches. As a writer and publicist Squier was perhaps best known to the public, but his writings could not guarantee him the comfortable living he wanted. For a few

years Squier was a businessman and promoter, but his aim was only to make enough money so that he could devote his time completely to his studies.

The fact that he had no profession, or rather that he had so many professions, makes Squier's career appear to lack cohesion. Yet his career did have unity--a unity that the biographical dictionaries find no means to express in their customary terminology--for it centered on one particular area, Central America. Squier was, in short, a Central Americanist.

Romantic, exotic Central America, whether of the ancient Mayas, the historic conquistadores, or the contemporary caudillos, irresistibly drew Squier to study its mysteries. After his diplomatic appointment he devoted most of the remainder of his active life studying, exploring, interpreting, and promoting Central America. He visited the region three times, spending a total of approximately twenty-seven months in remote Indian villages as well as in the centers of Central American political life.¹ He sought additional information about Central America in the archives of Spain, France, and Great Britain. Utilizing information gleaned from his studies and personal experience, he wrote nearly a dozen books and a large number of articles and pamphlets on the region. His diplomatic appointment, most of his business interests, his archaeological, ethnological, and historical

¹Though he traveled extensively in Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador, Squier did not visit either Guatemala or Costa Rica. He was appointed chargé d'affaires to Guatemala but he was also accredited to the four other Central American republics.

investigations, his promotional activities--all centered on Central America.

Central America was scarcely known to the people of the United States and Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century--just as Squier was entering upon his Central American career. Once recognized as the most strategically important area in the New World, it had declined in importance until by the early nineteenth century diplomats and scholars alike ignored it. The works of Alexander von Humboldt and John L. Stephens were but brief glimpses into the unknown. Isolation and neglect ended, however, when the expansion of the United States to the Pacific coast, the discovery of gold in California, and the consequent demand for transportation to the new regions revived interest in Central America and the possibilities it offered for interoceanic communication routes.

More information about Central America was required by the awakened public. The American Review noted that the growing interest in the region was not being satisfied by available literature:

Numberless signs denote that Central America will be the theatre of some of the most remarkable changes likely to be wrought by advancing civilization, and the world is becoming alive to the fact. Statesmen, merchants, navigators, colonizers, and students of natural science, are at last awakened to its future importance; and a demand has arisen for books and maps giving more thorough and general information concerning this remarkable country.²

Squier's mission to Central America in 1849 coincided with the renewed interest in the isthmian regions. He appeared on the scene at the propitious moment and with adequate motivation

²American Review, VI, n.s. (October, 1850), 436-37.

to answer many of the questions asked about Central America and he thus became the foremost authority and interpreter of the region to the rest of the world in the mid-nineteenth century.

Squier did not himself become interested in Central America until the late 1840's. By a circuitous and unlikely path his experiences led him from his birthplace in New York to a vital concern with the affairs of the little known region. He was born in a small town near Albany--Bethlehem--on June 21, 1821, and spent his boyhood in that vicinity, wherever his father, an itinerant Methodist preacher, happened to be located.³ Though he read widely, he had little formal schooling. By working part-time on his grandfather's farm and by teaching school himself, Squier managed to complete the curriculum at a small school in Poultney, Vermont in 1839. He had previously studied at schools at Charlton and Troy, New York.⁴

³The luster in Squier's ancestry is confined to the military. Samuel Squier was a lieutenant in the army of Oliver Cromwell. Great-grandfather Philip Squier served under General Roger Wolcott at Louisbourg in 1745. Grandfather Ephraim Squier fought at Bunker Hill and gained some fame as a soldier-diarist. Joel Squier, E. George's father, however, had no military background. Squier's mother, Katharine Kilmer Squier, of Dutch descent, died when he was twelve. His two younger half-brothers, Charles, who died in a railroad accident in 1868, and Frank, a prominent New York City paper manufacturer in the late nineteenth century, were children of Joel's second wife, Maria Kilmer Squier. Ephraim Squier to Joel Squier, July 11, 1833, Ephraim George Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society; Evert A. and George L. Duyckinck, Cyclopaedia of American Literature (2 vols., New York, 1856), II, 695; "Frank Squier," National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, III (New York, 1893), 324.

⁴E. George Squier to Joel Squier, June 30, 1839, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society; Joel Squier, "Account Book," ms. in ibid.

Although he later regretted it Squier did not concentrate on a specific profession in his youth. After having spent some time in preparing himself for a civil engineering career, he gave it up, apparently because of the unfavorable financial outlook following the Panic of 1837.⁵ The time was not wasted, for his engineering training was of use to him later in business, archaeology, and even diplomacy. He also considered education and the law. But after teaching school in the summer of 1841 he rejected that profession (against his father's advice), declining to become a "despised and miserable pedagogue--the most illy paid and thankless of all employments."⁶ Law he gave up for what he conceived to be a better opportunity in journalism.

Squier was early convinced that his talents, and therefore his future, lay in writing. One writing experience was already behind him at the age of nineteen. From November, 1840, to February, 1841, he edited a small paper at Charlton called the Literary Pearl: and Weekly Village Messenger.⁷ Although he failed in this "hairbrained and preposterous" project, as he later called it, Squier was not discouraged. Convinced of his high talents and spurred on by "an ambition that burns like fire in my veins," Squier left home in the

⁵Duyckinck, Cyclopaedia of American Literature, II, 695; Squier to editor of London Athenaeum, December 7, 1869.

⁶Squier to parents, December 30, 1841, June 24, 1842, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

⁷Frank Squier (ed.), A Collection of Books by Ephraim George Squier: His Own Copies, with Some Recently Acquired Additions, and a Few Books by Others (New York, 1939), 33.

fall of 1841 to seek work in Albany.⁸ There he met Joel Munsell, an antiquary and bookseller who employed Squier to help edit a new weekly newspaper, the New York State Mechanic.⁹

The Albany experience lasted two years, until Munsell ceased publishing the Mechanic as an unprofitable enterprise. Revealing a capacity to commit himself completely to a cause, Squier was swept off his feet by the plight of the workingmen, for whom the Mechanic was being printed. To alleviate their oppression, he launched a personal crusade to educate the working class:

I secretly determined to devote my talents, were they great or small, to the advancement of the social and intellectual interests of the mass of my countrymen. The more I have thought and reflected on their condition . . . the more solemnly have I resolved to devote myself to the great cause . . .¹⁰

He prepared lectures on "The Origin and Progress of Civilization" and "The Advancement of Society," in which he traced the improvement in the lot of the lower classes from Biblical times to 1840, and delivered them to workers not only in Albany, but in New York and Baltimore.¹¹ In addition to his newspaper duties and his lecturing on "the great cause,"

⁸Squier to parents, May 23, 1843, June 24, 1842, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

⁹For data on Munsell see S. Austin Allibone, A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors (3 vols., Philadelphia, 1897 edition), II, 1387.

¹⁰Squier to parents, May 23, 1843, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

¹¹Mss. of lectures in ibid.; Squier to parents, January 3, 1843, ibid.

Squier, driven by an energy as powerful as his ambition, undertook a variety of other activities. In December, 1841, for instance, he was writing three letters a week for the New York Journal of Commerce, composing poetry, searching for subscribers for his proposed Poet's Magazine, and planning a political and literary history of Portugal.¹²

Two issues of the Poet's Magazine, containing several of Squier's own poems, were brought out in 1842, but the journal, which Squier hoped would be a national repository of American poetry, did not succeed.¹³ The Portugal book failed to materialize, but one on China did. Squier compiled and edited some writings by G. Tradescent Lay, forming a book entitled The Chinese as They Are, published by Munsell in 1843.¹⁴ While in Albany Squier also occupied himself with the New York prison reform problem, writing several pamphlets on the subject and compiling reports of prison investigations.¹⁵ Efforts to get political appointments as deputy county superintendent of common schools and secretary of a mission to China were unsuccessful.

In June, 1843, the New York State Mechanic failed, and Squier, casting about for other employment, accepted a position as editor of the Hartford Journal. Elihu Geer, the

¹²Squier to parents, December 30, 1841, New-York Historical Society.

¹³Frank Squier (ed.), A Collection of Books, 34-35; Duyckinck, Cyclopaedia of American Literature, II, 695.

¹⁴Frank Squier (ed.), A Collection of Books, 4.

¹⁵Don C. Seitz (ed.), Letters from Francis Parkman to E. G. Squier (Cedar Rapids, 1911), 49; Squier to Charles Eliot Norton, December 24, 1852, Charles Eliot Norton Papers, Houghton Library.

publisher, established the Journal as a rival to the Hartford Courant and as a means of supporting Henry Clay in the 1844 presidential election.¹⁶ Squier, already becoming known as an ultra Whig and a Clay partisan,¹⁷ was an ideal man for the post. He tackled the job with his accustomed zeal and fiery temperament, becoming involved in a lawsuit along the way, and led the heretofore lethargic Whigs to the offensive. He was rewarded with increasing circulation and hearty Whig response. According to Squier: "The Journal has met with signal success--having run up in less than three months, to a larger circulation than any other paper in the state--not even excepting the 'Old Courant,' of 70 years' standing. . . . And our office became the headquarters of the [Whig] party."¹⁸ The Journal's campaign succeeded in Connecticut, for Clay won by a large majority, but it was not sufficient to bring a national Whig victory. The national defeat sapped the enthusiasm of Geer, who in January, 1845, sold the Journal to the rival Courant, much to Squier's astonishment, and the young editor was out of work again.¹⁹

Squier was now twenty-three years old. He had already published one book and several pamphlets, and had had four years of valuable newspaper experience. Shorn of his poetical

¹⁶Squier to parents, October 23, 1843, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society; Frank Squier (ed.), A Collection of Books, 36.

¹⁷New Orleans Delta, December 31, 1849, quoting from New York Journal of Commerce.

¹⁸Squier to parents, April 5, 1844, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

¹⁹Squier to parents, February 2, 1845, ibid.

ambitions, apparently by the failure of the Poet's Magazine, released from his pledge to improve the condition of the laboring class by what he called their ingratitude, disgusted with politics because of the defeat of his idol, Clay, and more importantly, set free by the sale of the Hartford Journal, Squier determined to start over again in the West.

The move to the West was no stab in the dark. Squier had a definite offer to take over the editorship of an established weekly in Chillicothe, Ohio, the Scioto Gazette, at an annual salary of \$600. Allowed by the Courant management to stay on for a few months, Squier remained in Hartford until April and made the trip west in the summer of 1845.²⁰ On August 21, the Scioto Gazette carried for the first time Squier's name as editor. He held the position for approximately fifteen months, during which time the Gazette became a daily and rose to the rank of third in the state in circulation.²¹

Squier quit the Gazette in December, 1846, upon his election as clerk of the House of Representatives of Ohio, which post he held until the adjournment of the legislature in the following February. The change from journalism to politics is significant. Squier had begun to feel that he was not getting ahead fast enough in the field of journalism, and that he had better get into something that promised

²⁰Squier to parents, February 24, 1845, July 20, 1845, New-York Historical Society; Henry Howe, "Some Recollections of Historic Travel over New York, New Jersey, Virginia, and Ohio, in the Seven Years from 1840-1847," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications, II (March, 1889), 446.

²¹Frank Squier (ed.), A Collection of Books, 5, 36.

greater fame, which at this time he valued more than money. The clerkship of the House, he explained, "is not as profitable, pecuniarily, as reporting, but it gives a man some little Eclat, which is sometimes worth more than money."²²

Politics, however, gave way to another Ohio interest which promised greater éclat in the scientific world than the clerkship did in the political. Immediately upon his arrival in Ohio Squier, who had already shown an interest in archaeological subjects as editor of the Mechanic and the Journal, began to notice the thousands of Indian mounds and earthworks dotting the terrain in the southern part of the state.²³ Ross County, of which Chillicothe is the county seat, happens to be, as later research has shown, one of the population centers of the midwestern aborigines, and contains more than 5000 mounds or earthworks.²⁴ Squier took advantage of the leisurely pace of the weekly newspaper to explore these archaeological remains, which were especially abundant along the Scioto River in the vicinity of Chillicothe. His companion and guide on most of his archaeological excursions was Edwin H. Davis, a Chillicothe physician who had been exploring the Indian mounds and collecting artifacts in the area for several years. Davis explored and collected as a hobby, but Squier quickly sensed the opportunity of turning their investigations into a joint literary and scientific publica-

²²Squier to parents, November 2, 1846, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

²³Squier to parents, July 20, 1845, ibid.

²⁴Eugene H. Roseboom and Francis P. Weisenburger, A History of Ohio (New York, 1934), 10.

tion.²⁵

The mounds of the Midwest, particularly those of the Ohio Valley, had been observed often and had excited curiosity before. The people responsible for the Ohio mounds, called moundbuilders for want of more specific information concerning them, were assumed to have been members of an advanced civilization which had mysteriously disappeared before white men penetrated the interior. Several superficial accounts of the mounds had appeared, two or three even before 1800, but none answered any vital questions about the moundbuilders and few supplied accurate figures concerning the number and extent of the mounds. In 1820 Caleb Atwater of Ohio published his Archaeologia Americana, in which he described some of the better known Ohio mounds, but he conducted no extensive excavations. Atwater's book aroused greater interest in the mounds, and several enthusiasts were in the field surveying and measuring specific mound areas, but no significant publication on the subject appeared for the next twenty-five years.²⁶

Squier and Davis worked together for two years exploring the mounds of southern Ohio and gathering data about mounds in neighboring states by correspondence. They began to read the available literature on archaeology in Europe and America and Squier began to publish articles on their work in

²⁵Squier to parents, November 26, 1845, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

²⁶Atwater's Archaeologia Americana was also published as Description of the Antiquities Discovered in the State of Ohio and Other Western States (Worcester, 1820); Henry C. Shetrone, The Mound-Builders (New York, 1930), 5-22.

professional journals. Benjamin Silliman's American Journal of Science and Arts carried two Squier articles in 1846 and two in 1847.²⁷ They were brief and somewhat amateurish, but they contributed new information and they brought Squier's name before the scientific world.

As early as June, 1846, Squier made a trip to the East in an effort to acquaint scholars with the work being done in Ohio and to persuade one or more of the scientific societies to finance the continuation of their studies and publication of the results. Squier met such distinguished scholars as Samuel G. Morton, William H. Prescott, Benjamin Silliman, Jared Sparks, and Albert Gallatin.²⁸ He received much encouragement and promises of financial aid. Gallatin, founder and president of the American Ethnological Society of New York, was so impressed with the work already done that he personally loaned Squier \$350 so that he could continue his labors.²⁹

Meanwhile Squier had persuaded Joseph Henry, secretary of the newly established and much debated Smithsonian Institution, to publish their work as the first volume in the Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge series. Although completed by May, 1847, just three months after the Ohio legislature adjourned, the book was not published until late 1848 as

²⁷American Journal of Science and Arts, II, second series (September, 1846), 216-18, 287-88; III, second series (March, 1847), 237-48; IV, second series (July, 1847), 145.

²⁸Letters from Morton, Prescott, Silliman, Sparks, Gallatin, and others are in the Ephraim George Squier Papers, Library of Congress; Squier to parents, June 29, 1846, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

²⁹Squier to parents, May 3, 1848, ibid.

Henry, wary of setting undesirable precedents, was extremely cautious about the details.³⁰ Such petty matters as the two authors' wrangle over whose name should appear first on the title page and how many complimentary copies should go to each author complicated the situation further. Squier actually wrote the book and superintended its publication, but Davis had collected most of the data and had borne most of the expense of the exploring expeditions. Squier succeeded in getting his name first, but the resulting ill will ended the collaboration of the two authors.³¹

Although dealing primarily with the Ohio mounds, the authors entitled their work Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley. It simply describes the mounds, classifies them into mounds of sepulture, mounds of sacrifice, temple mounds, effigy mounds, and mounds of observation, and discusses the artifacts found in them. What distinguishes the work from its predecessors is the accuracy and extent of the measurements taken and the beautiful engravings and maps which profusely illustrate it. The authors spoke with commendable restraint and objectivity; they merely concluded that the mounds were of great but unknown antiquity and that much further study remained to be done before positive conclusions could be arrived at. The most significant

³⁰See for example Joseph Henry to Squier, June 4, July 5, 1847, Squier Papers, Library of Congress; see also "Advertisement" in E. George Squier and Edward H. Davis, Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley (New York, 1848), 111-x.

³¹George P. Marsh to Squier, January 7, 1848, December 21, 1848; George R. Gliddon to Squier, October 20, 1848; Edward H. Davis to Squier, September 22, 1847; Squier to Davis, January 3, 1848, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

conclusion was the suggestion that the Ohio mounds were constructed by people closely related to the more advanced civilizations of South America. "We may venture to suggest that the facts thus far collected point to a connection more or less intimate between the race of the mounds and the semi-civilized nations which formerly had their seats among the sierras of Mexico, upon the plains of Central America and Peru."³² The authors did not elaborate on this point.

Ancient Monuments was immediately hailed on both sides of the Atlantic as a work of great importance. According to an English review: "This is not only by far the most important archaeological work that we have ever seen from the United States; but it is also 'got up' in a style of paper, printing, and illustration, which reflects great credit on the arts and sciences of our Transatlantic brethren."³³ When he received a copy Samuel Morton, a "physiological ethnologist" and author of Crania Americana, wrote Squier: "I have never seen any book that has so gratified me throughout."³⁴ George P. Marsh, a philologist, upon recommending its publication by the Smithsonian Institution as a member of the American Ethnological Society's examining committee, said that Ancient Monuments constituted "by far the most important contribution to the Archaeology of the United States, that

³²Squier and Davis, Ancient Monuments, 301.

³³London Literary Gazette, No. 1656 (October 14, 1848), 680; see also Allibone, A Critical Dictionary, II, 2215, quoting London Athenaeum.

³⁴Samuel G. Morton to Squier, September 25, 1848, Squier Papers, Library of Congress; on Morton see Allibone, A Critical Dictionary, II, 1376.

has ever been offered to the public."³⁵ The North American, in a thirty-page review, praised the authors' "intelligence, energy, and accuracy," and closed with the hope "that Mr. Squier may be encouraged to proceed in investigations which no other is fitted to accomplish so successfully."³⁶

The book has grown in stature as the science of archaeology has developed in the United States. Writing in 1903, J. P. MacLean said: "The result of this work was to promote a more active spirit of inquiry upon all questions connected with the ancient remains in the valleys of the Ohio and Mississippi. In one form or another it has become the real basis of all books written on the subject since its advent. In short it is the one standard authority on the subject."³⁷ One of the most thorough recent students of the moundbuilders, Henry C. Shetrone, called Ancient Monuments "the great classic of American archaeology."³⁸ Criticism of the volume has centered on minor inaccuracies and on Squier and Davis' interpretation of some burial mounds as sacrificial or altar mounds.³⁹ Other criticisms might be made, such as their

³⁵Marsh to Joseph Henry, June 9, 1847, in Squier and Davis, Ancient Monuments, x.

³⁶North American Review, LXVIII (April, 1849), 466, 495.

³⁷J. P. MacLean, "Ancient Works at Marietta, Ohio," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications, XII (January, 1903), 58.

³⁸Shetrone, The Mound-Builders, 22.

³⁹William C. Mills, "The Explorations of the Edwin Harness Mound," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications, XVI (April, 1907), 133-34; William C. Mills, "Baum Prehistoric Village," ibid., XV (January, 1906), 46-47; Cyrus Thomas, Introduction to the Study of North American Archaeology (Cincinnati, 1898), 97, 131.

failure to dispel the erroneous belief in a moundbuilding race superior to the Indians found in the Ohio Valley by the first white settlers,⁴⁰ but there is no doubt that the volume is entitled to the front rank among the pioneer volumes of American archaeology. At the time of publication it was so highly regarded that it vaulted Squier into public prominence in American science.

After seeing Ancient Monuments through the press Squier capitalized on his burgeoning reputation by persuading the New-York Historical Society and the Smithsonian Institution to finance an exploration of the mounds and earthworks of western New York.⁴¹ Squier made a whirlwind trip through western New York in less than eight weeks, including visits to relatives and friends, and hurried back to New York City in December, 1848, to read a paper before the Society and to prepare the results of his investigations for publication.⁴² This book, entitled Aboriginal Monuments of the State of New-York, was accepted for publication by the Smithsonian Institution after Squier's departure for Central America, and was published in 1850 as Volume II in the Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge series. Though less extensive than the previous volume, it contains maps and engravings equal in

⁴⁰William H. Holmes, Handbook of Aboriginal American Antiquities. Part I. Introductory: The Lithic Industries (Washington, 1919), 13.

⁴¹George H. Moore, secretary of New-York Historical Society, to Squier, October 20, 1848, Squier Papers, Library of Congress; American Journal of Science and Arts, XI, second series (May, 1851), 305 n.

⁴²Squier to parents, October 10, 1848, December 8, 1848 Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society; Moore to Squier, January 2, 1849, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

workmanship to those of Ancient Monuments. In this book he disappointed New York antiquaries by concluding that "the earth-works of Western New York were erected by the Iroquois or their western neighbors, and do not possess an antiquity going very far back of the discovery."⁴³

Up to April, 1849, when he received his diplomatic appointment, Squier had written very little pertaining to the archaeology of Central America. His scientific reputation, already established, rested on his works on archaeological remains within the borders of the United States. But in his Ohio researches he had become increasingly aware of the importance of Central America to his studies of the American Indian. He and Davis were acutely aware of the need to relate the moundbuilders to the higher civilizations to the south. In June, 1846, Davis told Squier:

There is so much to be done. The history . . . not only of this Ohio region, but those of Mexico, Central, and South America are to be studied. All that has been done heretofore on this our subject, in these three great regions must be critically examined and carefully compared with what we have accomplished.⁴⁴

Squier apparently took Davis' advice for in April, 1847, Squier attended a lecture on Egyptian archaeology and, in a discussion period, "adverted at length to some of the more imposing monuments of Mexico, Central America and Peru."⁴⁵

⁴³E. George Squier, Aboriginal Monuments of the State of New-York (New York, 1850), 83.

⁴⁴Edward H. Davis to Squier, June 14, 1846, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴⁵Unidentified and undated clipping (probably late April, 1847), Ephraim George Squier Papers, Middle American Research Institute; George B. Gliddon to Squier, April 28, 1847, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

Several of Squier's writings published before his departure for Central America also show evidence of research in Central American subjects. In Aboriginal Monuments of the State of New-York Squier appended a section comparing the defensive structures of the New York aborigines with those of the Aztecs, Mayas, and Incas. He also briefly compared burial practices and temple structures, relying chiefly on the Spanish chroniclers and concentrating on Mexico and Peru rather than on Central America.⁴⁶ In March, 1849, the American Journal of Science and Arts, edited by Benjamin Silliman, published Squier's brief article on the Aztec calendar stone and the fifty-two year cycle. In it Squier claimed to have discovered that the Aztec date for the winter solstice fell on December 21, rather than on December 22, as previously believed.⁴⁷ Shortly before leaving for Central America as chargé d'affaires Squier wrote two articles on the archaeological remains in the territories newly acquired from Mexico, especially California and New Mexico, and on early Spanish explorations in those regions.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Squier, Aboriginal Monuments, 93-98, 110-13, 142-46.

⁴⁷E. George Squier, "Some New Discoveries Respecting the Dates on the Great Calendar Stone of the Ancient Mexicans, with Observations on the Mexican Cycle of Fifty-two Years," American Journal of Science and Arts, VII, second series (March, 1849), 153-57.

⁴⁸E. George Squier, "New Mexico and California: The Ancient Monuments and the Aboriginal, Semi-Civilized Nations of New Mexico and California; with an Abstract of the Early Spanish Explorations and Conquests in Those Regions, Particularly Those Now Falling Within the Territory of the United States," American Review, II, n.s. (November, 1848), 503-28; E. George Squier, "Gold Hunting in California, in the Sixteenth Century," ibid., III, n.s. (January, 1849), 84-88.

Despite the cautiously worded conclusion in Ancient Monuments that there might be some "connection more or less intimate" between the moundbuilders of the Ohio Valley and the highly advanced civilizations of Mexico and Central America, Squier, by 1849, had definitely decided that there was a close link between the two Indian groups and he was determined to find evidence to support his belief. He believed that in Ohio "originated a semi-civilization which subsequently spread southward, constantly developing itself in its progress until it attained its height in Mexico," and that an investigation of the ruins of Central America and Mexico would present incontrovertible evidence of the basic unity of the builders of the earthworks of the Ohio Valley and the builders of the pyramids of Central America and Mexico.⁴⁹

In the back of Squier's mind was probably a desire to prove that the United States had a great past as well as a great future. Squier believed as fervently as did any member of the "Young America" school in the destiny of the United States to absorb all the territory to the Pacific coast and beyond and perhaps to the Isthmus of Panama.⁵⁰ To citizens of the United States in the 1840's, especially to optimists like Squier, the future held prospects for expansion,

⁴⁹The quotation is from a Squier article published in 1860. E. George Squier, "Ancient Monuments in the United States," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XXI (June, 1860), 27. Evidence that Squier held this view in 1848 is contained in various letters to Squier. For example, M. Lewis Clark to Squier, June 8, 1848, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵⁰E. George Squier, Nicaragua; Its People, Scenery, Monuments, and the Proposed Interoceanic Canal (2 vols., New York, 1852), 199, 290-91.

prosperity, and progress. But if anyone were ashamed of the comparison of Egypt's pyramids with Ohio's earthworks, Squier promised to eliminate the necessity to apologize. He would first show that the Central American ruins were as good or better than the Egyptian ruins. Then he would show that the builders of Central America's magnificent pyramids were the same people who built the mounds of the Mississippi Valley. Squier could not fail to have relished the words of a friend who wrote:

I cannot have a doubt, are not our mounds, the North American "Pyramids"? and may not their contents hereafter prove analagous to, and perhaps identify with those of Mexico and Central America? from their remains perhaps some American "Rosetta Stone" may yet be exhumed to discover to the astonished savans of the Old Continent that on our side of the "great Water," nations of civilized human beings with Arts, Sciences and religion have existed in the valleys, and peopled the banks of the American "Nile" thousands of years gone by; and probably prior to the "Nilotic" events themselves!⁵¹

Indeed, Squier himself exulted in this vein: "But why should not republican America produce something quite 'up' to the capabilities of old monarchical Egypt? Have we not bigger rivers, and if our alligators are not as large as her crocodiles, have we not an hundred times as many of them?"⁵²

But to get to Central America to continue his researches Squier had to have financial aid. The scientific societies debated Squier's requests for money to outfit an archaeological expedition, but despite the efforts of some of the country's

⁵¹M. Lewis Clark to Squier, June 8, 1848, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵²Undated clipping from Scioto Gazette reporting Squier's remarks at a lecture on Egyptian archaeology. Squier Papers, Middle American Research Institute.

leading scholars not enough money was obtained.⁵³ The federal government had financed explorations before but could not be depended upon as a patron of scholarship. As Representative James H. Hammond said, "I am one of those who do not think they [the congressmen] have any right to spend money for specific purposes" such as Squier proposed.⁵⁴ The Smithsonian Institution had published Ancient Monuments and had helped finance Squier's New York venture, but Secretary Joseph Henry was becoming increasingly disillusioned with Squier's argumentativeness and refused to help.⁵⁵

The election of 1848, won by Zachary Taylor and the Whig party, presented Squier with the opportunity he needed. Shortly after the election Squier, who apparently had not even voted for Taylor,⁵⁶ conceived of the idea of a diplomatic appointment as a means of getting to Central America to study the aboriginal ruins. There existed ample precedent for such an idea. John L. Stephens himself had gone to Central America on a diplomatic mission which allowed him plenty of time to indulge his scholarly curiosity concerning the ruins of

⁵³Charles Eliot Norton to Squier, April 2, 1849; Jared Sparks to Squier, July 30, 1848; Samuel G. Morton to Squier, December 23, 1848, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵⁴James H. Hammond to Squier, April 20, 1848, ibid.; Squier to Hammond, April 7, 1848, James H. Hammond Papers, ibid.

⁵⁵Joseph Henry to Squier, December 16, 1848, Squier Papers, ibid.

⁵⁶In July, 1848, Squier had said, "I shall in no way assist his [Taylor's] election; but shall, unless things shape themselves for the better, vote for Van Buren." Squier to parents, July 5, 1848, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society. Two months later he still planned to vote for Van Buren. Squier to Joel Squier, September 17, 1848, ibid.

[Guatemala and Yucatan.⁵⁷ Squier, like Stephens, got the
appointment he wanted, but Squier, unlike Stephens, became
deeply involved in a clash of interests between the United
States and Great Britain, which left him little time for
the perusal of the monuments of Central American aboriginal
civilization.]

⁵⁷John L. Stephens, Incidents of Travel in Central
America, Chiapas, and Yucatan (2 vols., New York, 1841),
I-II, passim.]

CHAPTER II

DIPLOMATIC AGENT: THE NICARAGUA CANAL

I arrived this morning from Boston, & was somewhat surprised at finding a telegraphic despatch, requesting my immediate presence in Washington, and stating that I had received the appointment of Minister of the United States to the Government of Central America. I had known that my friends, headed by Messrs. Gallatin, Everett, Prescott, Irving, Sparks, &c., had made an application for me, but I hardly dared hope that it would be successful."¹ Despite this profession of surprise in a letter written to his parents on the day his appointment was announced, Squier had worked hard for the post and had expected to get it. In an era when offices frequently fell to the most energetic and persistent office seekers, Squier showered Secretary of State John M. Clayton with recommendations solicited from friends and acquaintances. Eminent men, though they did not "make application" for him, warmly responded to Squier's plea for endorsement. William H. Prescott, Francis Parkman, Jared Sparks, Benjamin Silliman, Albert Gallatin, Francis Lieber, and other scholars, aware of Squier's archaeological explorations in Ohio and New York, endorsed his candidacy. Support

¹Squier to parents, April 2, 1849, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

from politicians who remembered his aid in the Whig campaigns of 1844 and 1846 and who were apparently unaware of his dissatisfaction with Taylor in 1848 and from men who knew of his training as a civil engineer carried additional weight.²

Having received the appointment Squier stepped into the vortex of Anglo-American isthmian rivalry with the impression that his duties as chargé d'affaires would be nominal. He apprehended the political importance the administration attached to his mission and was even inclined to exaggerate it, but as he prepared for the difficult journey he dreamed not of diplomatic glory but of making a startling contribution to archaeological knowledge.³ Had he known more of the interesting and complicated background of British and United States interests in Central America and how those interests had begun to clash, he might have been able to guess that the all-important present would leave little time for the pursuit of the past.

In the 1850's both the United States and Great Britain considered the reconciliation of their interests in Central America as essential to amicable Anglo-American relations. These conflicting interests never seriously threatened to cause an open rupture between 1848 and 1861, but statesmen dealing with the recurring diplomatic crises knew that war was not an impossibility. Two of the most serious crises--the canal question of 1849 and 1850 and the "Central American

²Over fifty letters recommending Squier are on file in Department of State, Applications and Recommendations for Office, 1845-52, National Archives.

³Squier to parents, April 2, 1849, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

"question" of 1856--brought angry outbursts from both sides, but negotiations and second thoughts soon reversed the trend toward war. The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850 smoothed over the first crisis, only to have different interpretations of its meaning give rise to the second. To save the treaty and to insure peace Great Britain yielded substantially to the American interpretation, and as the decade ended, according to one student of Anglo-American relations, more cordial relations prevailed between the two powers than at any time since 1783.⁴

British interest in Central America long antedated that of its inexperienced American rival. Native British freebooters, emboldened by a tradition of successful attack on Spain's American possessions, established themselves in the vicinity of the Belize River on the Yucatan Peninsula as early as the seventeenth century.⁵ The logging industry of the east coast of Yucatan, which had provided the incentive for a permanent settlement, attracted British immigrants and drove boundaries outward. Having repeatedly failed to dislodge the interlopers, Spain reluctantly conceded to the British the privilege of continuing their woodcutting activities. Sovereignty over the areas concerned, however, remained with Spain, as the treaties with Great Britain of 1783 and 1786 carefully stipulated.⁶

⁴H. C. Allen, Great Britain and the United States: A History of Anglo-American Relations (1783-1952) (London, 1954), 441.

⁵John A. Burdon (ed.), Archives of British Honduras (3 vols., London, 1931-1935), I, xiii; Alexander R. Gibbs, British Honduras: An Historical and Descriptive Account of the Colony from its Settlement, 1670 (London, 1883), 21-29.

⁶Burdon (ed.), Archives of British Honduras, I, 138, 154.

Profitable dyewood and mahogany markets enabled the settlement at Belize, later called British Honduras, to expand commercially, despite the anomaly of its position as a British occupation under Spanish sovereignty. The extinction of Spanish rule on the American continent by the Wars of Independence and the inability of the weak and strife-ridden republic of Central America effectively to assert its claims to the territory allowed British Honduras to take on the characteristics of an official British colony. Gradually the British recognized its importance as a base for dominating the international trade of the region of Central America. Finally, in 1862, after the fires of Anglo-American isthmian rivalry had subsided, Great Britain officially granted it colonial status.⁷

Utilizing old ties with the Mosquito Indians, who inhabited the Central American coast from approximately Cape Honduras to the San Juan River, Great Britain also exercised a considerable degree of authority on the Mosquito Shore during the first half of the nineteenth century. Although favored with neither the political nor the commercial attention shown to the Belize settlement, the Mosquito Shore emerged from the eighteenth-century tangle of Anglo-Spanish rivalry closely aligned with Great Britain. British agents distributed presents and under the guise of "protecting" the Mosquito Indians from their enemies expanded the Mosquito boundaries outward. British merchants thus found more territory for their logging activities. The arrangement was perhaps a

⁷Burdon (ed.), Archives of British Honduras, III, 247.

burden to the British foreign and colonial offices, but the British government, conscientiously committed to protection, could not withdraw before providing other means for Mosquito security.⁸

The proprietor of a woodcutting, trade-minded colony at Belize and the possessor of extraordinary influence on the Mosquito Coast, Great Britain exercised the dominant foreign influence in the Republic of Central America up to 1839 and in the five separate republics after 1839. Great Britain furnished most of the credit and manufactured goods supplied to Central America and aspired to lead the fledgling republics to prosperity under its protecting wing. But the growing economic dependence of the Central American states upon Great Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century did not insure harmony. The inability to pay even the interest on British loans, or to pay the constantly mounting private claims of British citizens, or to stop the gradual British territorial expansion along the Mosquito Shore created, for the Central American republics, an uneasy tension. In the face of vastly superior force, they followed a policy of resistance to British demands for payment and British expansion by protest and delay.

Frederick Chatfield, British consul and later consul general in Central America in the 1830's and 1840's and chargé d'affaires from 1849 to 1852, personified British hard-headedness in the eyes of the Central Americans who dealt

⁸Richard W. Van Alstyne, "The Central American Policy of Lord Palmerston, 1846-1848," Hispanic American Historical Review, XVI (August, 1936), 352-53, 355-56.

with him. He it was who pressed the republics for payment of private claims and proposed, it was believed, to take advantage of the confused, debt-ridden economies of the Central American republics to insure the hegemony of Great Britain. He favored the use of Guatemala as a buffer state against the onslaught of the advancing Americans and the erection of British naval bases on both sides of Central America as a means of maintaining British control.⁹ In Conservative-dominated Guatemala and Costa Rica, whose prosperity depended on the British market for cochineal and coffee respectively, Chatfield by the late 1840's had strongly established British influence. But El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras, where Liberal politicians dominated and where British trade was not of so much importance as in the two Conservative states, remained opposed to Chatfield and to the extension of British influence.¹⁰

Chatfield's policy was bold and threatening, but it did not always coincide with the policy of his superiors. British colonial policy at mid-century was, in fact, anti-expansive and conciliatory. The financial burdens of colonial possessions were being weighed against their imperial and strategic advantages. Not that colonies should be abandoned, although that was the ultimate expectation of many Little Englanders, but it was widely agreed that no additional

⁹Frederick Chatfield to Lord Palmerston, British foreign minister, January 28, 1849, Great Britain, Public Record Office, Foreign Office, 15:45.

¹⁰Robert A. Naylor, "British Commercial Relations with Central America, 1821-1851" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1958), 62-69, 273.

colonial problems should be taken on. Foreign affairs and commercial considerations dictated that strategic areas should be retained and perhaps strengthened, but not expanded.¹¹ Thus, although Great Britain held no designs of colonial expansion in Central America, she wished to assure the safety of her holdings in that area.

The British attitude toward the proposed Nicaragua canal reflected this general foreign and colonial policy. Two isthmian routes--Tehuantepec and Panama--appeared to be falling under United States influence. Great Britain feared that if the third route--Nicaragua--also fell into American hands, British merchants would be confronted with an American monopoly of isthmian transit.¹² As the 1840's progressed Great Britain's interest in the Mosquito protectorate increased, and in early 1848 a British force occupied the port of San Juan, Nicaragua, the most likely eastern terminus of the proposed canal, in the name of the Mosquito King. Observers in the United States viewed the occupation as a move to monopolize the Nicaragua canal route. The event probably signified, however, that the British intended

¹¹E. A. Benians, "Colonial Self-Government, 1852-1870," in The Cambridge History of the British Empire, II (Cambridge, 1929), 678; Arthur P. Newton, "International Colonial Rivalry: The New World, 1815-1870," in ibid., 540; Paul Knaplund, The British Empire, 1815-1939 (New York, 1941), 197-99.

¹²Mosquito, Nicaragua, and Costa-Rica (London, 1849), 15-16; William C. Rives to John M. Clayton, September 25, 1849, William R. Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, 1831-1860 (12 vols., Washington, 1929-1939), VII, 315. Rives, United States minister to France, stopped in London to interview Palmerston before Abbott Lawrence, the new minister to Great Britain, reached his post.

to avert an American monopoly.

The possibility of an isthmian canal and the certainty of its immense strategic and commercial value to the United States caused sporadic flashes of American interest in the Central American region. But the numerous canal projects of the early nineteenth century never roused the United States past the speculative and investigating stage. A canal policy was, however, formulated. Shortly after the enunciation of the Monroe Doctrine, the United States went on record as favoring a neutral isthmian canal. Secretary of State Henry Clay, in his instructions to the American delegates to the Panama Congress of 1826, declared: "If the work should ever be executed . . . the benefits of it ought not to be exclusively appropriated to any one nation, but should be extended to all parts of the globe, upon the payment of a just compensation or reasonable tolls."¹³ The policy of exclusive control, advocated by few men in the early years, did not prevail until after the Civil War. Most Americans realized that, however much the United States might want exclusive control, it lacked the military strength to enforce such a policy.

Before 1848 the United States had shown practically no concern over British activities in Central America. It did not challenge British advances in Belize and the Mosquito Shore, and it paid no heed to the bitter, futile protests of

¹³Henry Clay to Richard S. Anderson and John Sergeant, May 8, 1826, H. Report 145, 30 Cong., 2 Sess., 331. See also Theodore E. Burton, "Henry Clay," in Samuel Flagg Bemis (ed.), The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy, IV (New York, 1929), 152-53. American canal diplomacy is sketched in James G. Whiteley, "The Diplomacy of the United States in Regard to Central American Canals," North American Review, CLXV (September, 1899), 364-78.

Honduras and Nicaragua. Agents from the United States were not even in regular residence to observe British activities. Occasionally representatives were appointed for the hazardous and remote Central American post, but rarely did they arrive and carry out their duties. Of the eleven appointees before 1848 only one stayed at his post for more than a few months; six never reached Central America. Between 1842 and 1848 no representatives were appointed.¹⁴

An abrupt realization of the importance of Central America to the United States came with a series of momentous events of the late 1840's. The Oregon migrations, the Oregon boundary settlement, the Mexican War, the acquisition of California, and the discovery of gold in California inexorably drew the Central American isthmus into the widening United States orbit. To get to the newly acquired Pacific coast territories without long delays and serious inconvenience, North Americans had to travel by way of the narrowest part of the continent--Central America. Stirred by the importance of the isthmus to the maintenance of a close connection with the Pacific territories President James K. Polk accepted the unauthorized Bidlack treaty with New Granada, providing for American right of way across Panama, and dispatched Elijah P. Hise as United States chargé d'affaires to Guatemala.

Polk was disturbed over the preponderating influence of Great Britain in Central America but he did not yet know what to do about it. "The Government of the United States," said

¹⁴An excellent account of this phase of American diplomacy is the essay entitled "Diplomatic Futility," in Joseph B. Lockey, Essays in Pan-Americanism (Berkeley, 1939), 23-50.

Secretary of State James Buchanan in his instructions to Hise, "has not yet determined what course it will pursue in regard to the encroachments of the British Government as protector of the King and Kingdom of the Mosquitos."¹⁵ The administration, which was known as a zealous advocate of the Monroe Doctrine, apparently had no illusions about applying it to Central America. No protest was made of the British seizure of San Juan or the extension of the Mosquito protectorate, and the desperate Nicaraguan pleas for help were left unanswered. Hise was sent merely to observe and to negotiate commercial treaties with Guatemala and El Salvador.¹⁶ At the time the instructions were written news of Mexican acceptance of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had not yet been received.¹⁷ With the nation still at war Polk did not wish to antagonize Great Britain unduly. Moreover, he probably did not have sufficient information to formulate a more positive policy, as the United States had had no diplomatic representative in Central America since 1842.¹⁸

James K. Polk left the presidency in 1849 with the

¹⁵James Buchanan to Elijah P. Hise, June 3, 1848, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 33.

¹⁶Ibid., 33, 35.

¹⁷Buchanan to Edmund Burke, December 3, 1849, George E. Belknap (ed.), "Letters of Bancroft and Buchanan on the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, 1849, 1850," American Historical Review, V (October, 1899), 98-99.

¹⁸According to Dexter Perkins, the reasons for the Polk administration's inertia lay "in the complete torpor of American public opinion at this time. . . . in the distraction of the pending presidential election, in the probable ignorance of Polk with regard to the whole matter, and in the natural timidity of Buchanan." Perkins, The Monroe Doctrine, 1826-1867 (Baltimore, 1933), 170.

reputation of a vigorous defender of American soil against foreign interference. Zachary Taylor succeeded him with credentials which would lead few men to believe that he would outdo his predecessor as an opponent of foreign intrusion on the American continent. Although the point was not stressed, in the campaign of 1848 he was presented as a friend of peace and as an opponent of the subjugation of other nations.¹⁹ Manifest Destiny and the Monroe Doctrine the staid, conservative President regarded as unnecessary irritants to international relations. John M. Clayton, his Secretary of State, agreed.²⁰ The new Whig administration contained none of the great leaders of the Whig party, and was opposed by a Democratic majority in Congress. Without sturdy political and public support the Taylor administration "lacked the mandate, experience, and cohesion essential to first-rate executive leadership."²¹ Prospects for a spirited policy toward Great Britain were small.

Notwithstanding the pacifist nature of the new administration, Taylor and Clayton made their interest in Central America clear and unmistakable. Although they adhered to the Clay policy of neutral transit routes they definitely favored

¹⁹Brainerd Dyer, Zachary Taylor (Baton Rouge, 1946), 293.

²⁰Holman Hamilton, Zachary Taylor: Soldier in the White House (Indianapolis, 1951), 202, 237; Mary W. Williams, "John Middleton Clayton," in Samuel Flagg Bemis (ed.), American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy, VI (New York, 1929), 9-14.

²¹Holman Hamilton, "'The Cave of the Winds' and the Compromise of 1850," Journal of Southern History, XXIII (August, 1957), 334.

an American-constructed Nicaragua canal.²² And although they professed the utmost friendship for Great Britain, they adopted the policy of showing sympathy to the Central American states suffering from British-backed Mosquito encroachments. Because of the seriousness of the Central American situation, and because an American canal company anxiously desired diplomatic aid, the Taylor administration, which had announced that no diplomatic appointments would be made until after the end of the current fiscal year (July 1, 1849), decided to recall Hise and send a new representative to Central America as soon as possible.²³ Squier was the man chosen for the job.

Although the administration apparently did not object to Squier's antiquarian ambitions and probably even prided itself on its patronage of science, Clayton's official instructions to the new chargé d'affaires placed primary importance on the proposed Nicaragua canal. The American Atlantic and Pacific Ship-Canal Company, which was organized in 1849 in New York by Cornelius Vanderbilt, Joseph L. White, Nathaniel H. Wolfe, and their associates, had convinced the Secretary of State of the necessity of diplomatic support in Nicaragua, and Squier was authorized to give such aid.²⁴ He

²²John M. Clayton to E. George Squier, May 1, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 50; Lindley M. Keasbey, The Nicaragua Canal and the Monroe Doctrine (New York, 1896), 196-97.

²³New York Tribune, March 16, March 20, 1849; New Orleans Delta, April 16, 1849..

²⁴Joseph L. White, chief counselor of the company and a former Whig congressman, was a friend of Clayton and a supporter of the administration. He conferred with Clayton before Squier's instructions were drafted, and coached Squier on what to say when Squier went to Washington to meet Clayton. White to Squier, March 29, April 4, 1849, Squier

was to supervise and encourage the company's negotiations with Nicaragua, but the United States government was in no way to be made a part of the contract. He was also to serve as a check upon the company. Clayton, fearing the possible effects of speculation on the canal project, instructed Squier to see that the contract was made unassignable to others. The influence of the government, through Squier, was also to be used to prevent unreasonable tolls and to safeguard the transit from excessive company control.²⁵

Clayton believed that consummation of the canal project depended on the existence of a treaty between Nicaragua and the United States. In instructing Squier to conclude such a treaty Clayton emphasized that the United States wished no exclusive advantage: "We desire no monopoly of the right of way for our commerce. . . . We only ask an equal right of passage for all nations on the same terms." In order to encourage the construction of the desired canal the United States, Clayton said, was willing to enter into a treaty with Nicaragua promising "that both governments shall forever protect and defend the proprietors who may succeed in cutting the Canal." The Secretary of State anticipated no difficulty from Nicaragua: "You will not want arguments to induce Nicaragua to enter into such a treaty with us. The canal

Papers, Library of Congress. For details on the canal company see Wheaton J. Lane, Commodore Vanderbilt: An Epic of the Steam Age (New York, 1942), 87-88; and William O. Scroggs, Filibusters and Financiers: The Story of William Walker and his Associates (New York, 1916), 78-81. Authorization to aid the canal company was given in Clayton to Squier, May 1, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 38.

²⁵Ibid., 50.

will be productive of more benefit to her than any other country of the same limits."²⁶ For this reason Clayton instructed Squier not "to give as a compensation for the grant of right of way any guaranty of the independence of the country through which the canal or rail road might pass."²⁷

That part of Squier's instructions relating to the Mosquito protectorate left him considerable latitude of interpretation. While Squier was warned "not to involve this country in any entangling alliance on the one hand or any unnecessary controversy on the other," he was also given the freedom to sympathize with the Central American republics opposing the Mosquito protectorate. "You may assure him [the Nicaraguan minister of foreign affairs]," said Clayton, "that we entertain the liveliest sympathy for his government and will employ any moral means in our power for the purpose of frustrating the apparent designs of Great Britain in countenancing the claims to sovereignty over the Mosquito Coast, and the Port of San Juan asserted by her ally the alleged monarch of that region."²⁸ In a supplementary instruction of November, 1849, Clayton asserted that "we shall never admit the Mosquito claim to the sovereignty over any part of Nicaragua."²⁹ Thus, without sanctioning a formal guarantee of Nicaraguan sovereignty over the disputed territory, Clayton gave Squier authority to encourage resistance

²⁶ Clayton to Squier, May 1, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 50-51.

²⁷ Ibid., 40-41.

²⁸ Ibid., 38-39.

²⁹ Clayton to Squier, November 20, 1849, ibid., 56.

to British claims..

It had been United States policy to encourage Central American union. In 1849, when Squier's mission began, the federated republic of Central America had already been dead for ten years and there seemed to be little prospect of its revival. Squier's instructions, however, called for continuation of the old policy. If reconstruction of the confederation appeared to him to be impossible, Squier was to treat with each republic individually, and he was authorized to sign commercial treaties with all five. Inasmuch as the canal was the most important object of his mission, Squier was allowed to take up residence in León, Nicaragua, although his official appointment assigned him to Guatemala.³⁰

On June 6, 1849, after a long and tedious voyage of twenty-six days from New York, Squier arrived at San Juan, Nicaragua.³¹ The occasion of his coming was of more than passing significance to Nicaragua. No United States diplomat had ever before been assigned to the state.³² This flattering recognition of Nicaragua's importance came at an opportune time for Nicaragua, for relations with its powerful adversary, Great Britain, had reached an impasse. The gradual revival of the Mosquito-British claims to the Atlantic coast had been protested by Nicaragua, but with no favorable result. At length, on January 1, 1848, British forces seized the port

³⁰Clayton to Squier, May 1, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 40.

³¹Squier to parents, June 8, 1849, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

³²Alberto Medina, Efemérides nicaraguenses, 1502-1941 (Managua, 1945), 135, 188.

of San Juan for their Mosquito allies. Retaliating for a Nicaraguan attempt to recover the town, the British captured the fort of San Carlos, approximately seventy-five miles up the San Juan River, and forced the Nicaraguans to agree to a convention in which Nicaragua promised not to disturb the status quo.³³ Nicaragua's only alternatives were to go to war, to submit, or to seek a powerful ally. War was impossible; submission unthinkable. But protection from the United States seemed within her grasp. With the arrival of a plenipotentiary from the United States, Nicaraguans swallowed their fears of invasion from the North, which dated from Mexican War days, and anxiously placed their hopes on a treaty of protection and alliance with the United States.

Traveling with a personal servant, a secretary, and an artist, Squier made the unpleasant but picturesque bongo trip up the San Juan River and across Lake Nicaragua to Granada without incident. Delayed at Granada by rumors of a revolutionary attack on the city, he finally continued the journey to León escorted by a band of twenty-five California-bound immigrants. Everywhere he was received with the greatest respect and enthusiasm. A newspaper correspondent who accompanied the Squier entourage from Granada to León described the scene as follows:

The arrival of the "Ministro" (they will term him nothing less than a plenipotentiary!) was a great event, and he was received in a most enthusiastic manner. . . . thousands crowded up to shake his hands. Mr. Squier sustained his position with great dignity and courtesy of manner, which seemed to win the hearts

³³José Dolores Gámez, Historia de la costa de Mosquitos (Hasta 1894) (Managua, 1939), 231-39.

of all. Now and then he would converse with Spanish gentlemen who rode up to him, and again with the Indians.³⁴

At León Squier surely received one of the most flattering receptions Nicaragua ever offered a foreign dignitary.³⁵ On the morning of July 5, 1849, the city was alerted of Squier's impending arrival, and a delegation of the leading citizens rushed out to greet him and escort him to the plaza. The procession, consisting of the prominent civil, military, and church officials of the city, and headed by a Nicaraguan army officer carrying the United States flag, rode through the streets to the plaza amid the firing of salutes, the playing of martial music, the ringing of bells, and the shouting of the enthusiastic populace. After brief speeches, which nobody understood because of the noise, Squier was escorted to the home of the United States consul, Joseph W. Livingston, only to be feted again in the evening by serenades and fireworks.³⁶

The ebullient welcome continued with a Te Deum chanted at the cathedral for Squier's safe arrival, and a round of dinners and balls, reaching another climax on July 9, when Squier officially presented his credentials. The ceremony

³⁴New Orleans Delta, November 12, 1849; National Intelligencer, November 3, 1849. This article was originally printed in the Providence Journal.

³⁵Gómez, Historia de la costa de Mosquitos, 252; Medina, Efemérides nicaraguenses, 136.

³⁶There are numerous accounts of this event in contemporary newspapers and secondary works. Most are probably based on either the article in the Correo del Istmo (León), July 16, 1849 (This issue was sent to Palmerston by Chatfield and is in Foreign Office, 15:59), or Squier's own version in Squier, Nicaragua, I, 245-49.

of presentation, ordinarily a private affair of little significance, was attended by a large crowd which spilled out into the plaza in front of the National Palace. Heraldizing the event as a "New Era for Nicaragua," the Correo del Istmo described the scene in detail and predicted that July 9 would henceforth be celebrated with an enthusiasm equal to that of the day of Nicaragua's independence.³⁷

Openly and naively many Nicaraguans believed that Squier had come as the savior of their country.³⁸ In its account of the official reception the Correo del Istmo revealed a deep-seated and pathetic hope for American protection:

The edges of the flags of Nicaragua and North America touched, forming to the view a single banner. . . . It was something to see the affectionate demonstration that his Excellency Mr. Squier made at the time of leaving, taking the corner of our flag in his hands and directing toward the man who held it a penetrating look, as if to denote that an efficacious and firm protection in our favor had already been agreed upon.³⁹

The official government newspaper organ commented that Nicaragua had always recognized the United States as the natural protector of the continent and particularly of Nicaragua, which had identified its cause with that of the United States.⁴⁰

Squier's speech at the formal reception did little to dispel the Nicaraguan view of his mission. His statement that it would be his aim "not only to confirm the present

³⁷Correo del Istmo, July 16, 1849, in Foreign Office, 15:59.

³⁸Lorenzo Montúfar, Reseña histórica de Centro América (7 vols., Guatemala, 1878-1887), VI, 156.

³⁹Correo del Istmo, July 16, 1849, in Foreign Office, 15:59.

⁴⁰Boletín Oficial (León), July 5, 1849, in Foreign Office, 15:61.

harmony and good correspondence which exist between the two Republics, but to create new ties of friendship, and to promote a closer and more intimate relationship between them" seemed innocuous enough, though subject to varying interpretations. But in commenting on the Monroe Doctrine he appeared to go beyond the diplomatic civilities, and indeed to misrepresent the attitude of the Taylor administration. "We should proclaim," he said, "in language distinct and firm, that the American continent belongs to Americans, and is sacred to Republican Freedom. We should let it be understood, that if foreign powers encroach upon territories or invade the rights of any one of the American States, they inflict an injury upon all, which it is alike the duty and determination of all to see redressed."⁴¹ According to the National Intelligencer, the national Whig organ, Nicaragua "might well have inferred from his remarks that we were ready at once to take our stand upon the declaration of Mr. Monroe, and to resist every attempt of Great Britain to gain a foothold in Central America."⁴² The speech was well calculated to buoy up Nicaraguan expectations of more than moral aid from the United States.⁴³

In his brief reply to Squier President Norberto Ramírez dwelt on his country's desire for protection. After thanking God for Squier's "extraordinary intervention," he said:

Nicaragua has long felt the necessity of sheltering itself under the bright banner of the North

⁴¹The speech is printed in full in Squier, Nicaragua, I, 251-53.

⁴²National Intelligencer, October 13, 1849.

⁴³Chatfield to Palmerston, July 27, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:59; New York Tribune, October 10, 1849.

American Confederacy; but the time which the Arbiter of nations had designated for such high happiness and consequent prosperity had not arrived. . . . We had made some advances to the American Government with a view to this happy consummation; but our hopes were scarcely sustained by their result. But I now see all the elements of a happy future brought before us; there is good faith in the Government with which I am connected; the friendliest feelings towards North America pervades /sic/ every NICARAGUAN heart; and we have the assurances of the sympathy and support of the American Government.⁴⁴

With these emphatic professions of faith in the United States, given extra poignancy by the sincere manifestations of friendship to the American chargé d'affaires, it was clear that Squier's problem would lie not in establishing friendly relations, but in keeping the friendship at a diplomatically respectable arms' length.

News of Squier's speech and Ramírez' reply reached the United States in October, and immediately set off a debate on the Monroe Doctrine in a number of Eastern newspapers. The National Intelligencer and other Whig newspapers took the position that Squier's speech was an unauthorized assertion of a dangerous principle.⁴⁵ On the other hand, anti-administration papers came to the defense of Squier, arguing that Monroe's pronouncement must be upheld by coming to the aid of Nicaragua against Great Britain.⁴⁶ The curious circumstance of a Whig diplomatic agent receiving support from

⁴⁴Ramírez' speech is printed in full in Squier, Nicaragua, I, 253-54.

⁴⁵National Intelligencer, October 13, 1849. The New York Courier and Enquirer, the Charleston Courier, the New York Tribune, the New Orleans Crescent, and the New Orleans Delta criticized the speech.

⁴⁶Supporting Squier were the Washington Union, the Baltimore Sun, and the New York Journal of Commerce.

Democrats, but not Whigs, was due to the fact that Squier's speech did not represent the views of the administration. This was made even more clear, though not to the public, when Clayton told John Crampton, the British chargé d'affaires in Washington, that the administration did not adhere to the Monroe Doctrine, and that Squier had not been instructed to make any allusion to it in his communications with Nicaragua.⁴⁷ Nevertheless Squier received no reprimand from his government for the statements he made, suggesting that Clayton did not regard the chargé's pronouncements as harmful to the interests of the United States.

In Nicaragua the glamour of the León reception left an atmosphere bursting with cordiality. Squier took advantage of it and set industriously to work on the primary object of his mission--securing a canal contract for an American company.

Three canal companies--two American, one British--were in serious competition for a contract in 1849. The New York and New Orleans Steam Navigation Company already had an agent, David T. Brown, in Nicaragua early in the year. On March 14, Brown secured the signature of the Nicaraguan commissioner on a contract in favor of the company he represented. In order to get it he not only promised that United States protection would be forthcoming, he formally agreed that the company should finance a Nicaraguan mission

⁴⁷Crampton to Palmerston, October 15, 1849, Hunter Miller (ed.), Treaties and other International Acts of the United States of America, V (Washington, 1937), 726.

to the United States to seek such protection.⁴⁸ The company's New York directors refused to accept these terms and thereby temporarily eliminated themselves from the competition.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, a British firm successfully negotiated a contract in London. William Wheelwright, who had organized the Pacific Steam Navigation Company and who was primarily responsible for the construction of the trans-Andean railroad between Chile and Argentina, was the British negotiator. Francisco Castellón, the Nicaraguan chargé d'affaires in London, signed for Nicaragua. According to Chatfield, the only publicity it received in Nicaragua was unfavorable. Since its acceptance depended on a settlement of the Mosquito question, which then seemed impossible, Nicaragua refused to ratify the contract.⁵⁰

The third company, the American Atlantic and Pacific Ship-Canal Company, entered the field with the United States government as its ally. Squier's aid was apparently effective. David L. White, brother of Joseph L. White, had been in Nicaragua at least since April trying to get a contract.⁵¹ He was an able negotiator and was well-liked by the

⁴⁸Chatfield to Palmerston, May 7, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:58; New York Tribune, April 18, 1849; New Orleans Crescent, May 2, 1849.

⁴⁹Chatfield to Sebastián Salinas, Nicaraguan foreign minister, September 3, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:59; Squier to Clayton, August 20, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 348.

⁵⁰Chatfield to Palmerston, June 18, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:58.

⁵¹Joseph L. White to Squier, April 4, 1849, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

Nicaraguans,⁵² but he had not yet accomplished his object and he therefore anxiously awaited Squier's help.⁵³ The coming of the chargé d'affaires gave impetus to the negotiations. With Squier sitting in as supervisor the contract was completed and signed August 27, 1849, and ratified by the Nicaraguan assembly in September.

By the White canal contract Nicaragua granted to the company "the exclusive right and privilege of constructing a Ship Canal across its territory." The canal was to be completed within twelve years and the contract was to last eighty-five years. Nicaragua was to receive \$10,000 upon ratification of the contract and \$10,000 annually thereafter until completion of the canal. So far the contract did not differ from numerous other similar bargains. Certain provisions, however, revealed the presence of Squier at the negotiators' table. Article 9, which Squier, according to his own testimony, had inserted into the contract, read: "It is further stipulated that a majority of the stock of said Canal shall always be owned by citizens of the United States." Another article bearing Squier's imprint was number 36, which stated:

It is expressly stipulated on the part of the State of Nicaragua that the vessels, products, manufactures, and citizens of all nations shall be permitted to pass upon the proposed Canal . . . subject to no other nor higher duties, charges, or taxes, than shall be imposed upon those of the United States, provided always that such nations shall first enter into such treaty stipulations and guarantees respecting said Canal as may hereafter be entered into between the State of Nicaragua and the United States.

⁵²Thomas Manning, British consul in León, to Chatfield, August 23, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:59.

⁵³Squier to Clayton, June 23, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 336.

Lastly, in accordance with his instructions, Squier saw to it that the contract was made unassignable to others and, for Nicaragua's protection, that the company's books were always to be open for inspection.⁵⁴

The London Times, which believed that the canal would never be built, regarded the contract as an ingenious Nicaraguan stratagem to get United States backing of its territorial claims.⁵⁵ Great Britain indeed protested the contract, as it had the Brown contract, for the canal route involved territory claimed by the Mosquito King, who had not been consulted.⁵⁶ Clayton, however, hastened to inform Crampton that he, too, was not wholly satisfied. Clayton told the British chargé that the general tenor of the contract was in accordance with Squier's instructions, but that the provisions for American control definitely were not. Clayton and Crampton concluded that negotiations between Great Britain and the United States would eventually necessitate the remodeling of the contract.⁵⁷ Yet the contract remained in force until the company itself came to the conclusion that a canal was not financially feasible at that time.

⁵⁴Squier to Clayton, September 10, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 366. A copy of the contract is in ibid., 361 n.-366 n.

⁵⁵New York Tribune, November 19, 1849, and New Orleans Delta, December 3, 1849, quoting from London Times.

⁵⁶Clayton to Abbott Lawrence, December 29, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, VII, 57; Anthony Barclay, British consul in New York, to S. H. Ackerman, July 30, 1849, in Mosquito, Nicaragua, and Costa-Rica, 13-14.

⁵⁷Crampton to Palmerston, October 15, 1849, Miller (ed.), Treaties and other International Acts, V, 726.

Negotiations for a treaty between the United States and Nicaragua were in progress when the canal contract was signed. Six days after the signing of the canal contract Squier and Hermenegildo Zepeda, who had been a canal commissioner, signed the so-called Squier treaty. Squier reported that the only difficulty had been the excessive hopes of the Nicaraguans, who had been led to believe that the United States would agree to guarantee their entire territory.⁵⁸

The Squier treaty was a treaty of amity and commerce with an additional article relating to interoceanic transit. In the additional article Nicaragua pledged to allow the government and citizens of the United States free and unencumbered transit across the country by whatever transportation facility that might be constructed. Both governments pledged their protection of the canal and the company building it. As in the case of the White canal contract, none of the privileges granted to the United States could be extended to any other country without a treaty with Nicaragua guaranteeing the protection of the canal. United States protection was granted only so long as the canal was under the control of American citizens.

In return for the privilege of the right of transit the United States, according to the treaty, "distinctly" recognized "the rights of sovereignty and property which the State of Nicaragua possesses in and over the line of said canal, and . . . guarantees positively and efficaciously the entire

⁵⁸Squier to Clayton, September 10, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 368.

neutrality of the same."⁵⁹ Squier undoubtedly considered this concession relatively harmless, compared with the Hise treaty, which guaranteed all of Nicaraguan territory. But the guarantee of Nicaraguan sovereignty over the line of the canal still brought the United States face to face with Great Britain. The most likely canal route, in the eyes of Squier, the American Atlantic and Pacific Ship-Canal Company, and the United States government, started at the Gulf of Fonseca on the Pacific side and continued through Lakes Managua and Nicaragua, and down the San Juan River to the town of San Juan.⁶⁰ San Juan was in the hands of the British. And Lord Palmerston, Great Britain's foreign minister, had announced that San Juan and the Mosquito protectorate would not be relinquished.⁶¹ Ratification of the Squier treaty by the United States would thus be a direct challenge to Great Britain. Squier was unhesitatingly willing to make this challenge; the Taylor administration was not.

The Nicaraguan assembly ratified the Squier treaty on September 27, 1849, without a dissenting vote. By November Eduardo Carcache was on his way to Washington to seek ratifi-

⁵⁹Miller (ed.), Treaties and other International Acts, V, 725.

⁶⁰This route was considered the best until 1851, when Orville W. Childs, surveying for the canal company, found a low pass between Lake Nicaragua and the Pacific. Gerstle Mack, The Land Divided: A History of the Panama Canal and Other Isthmian Canal Projects (New York, 1944), 172; Miles P. Du Val, Jr., Cadiz to Cathay: The Story of the Long Struggle for a Waterway Across the American Isthmus (Stanford University, 1940), 39.

⁶¹New Orleans Crescent, December 29, 1849, quoting London Times.

cation by the United States.⁶² Carcache found a muddled situation. Clayton did not approve of the Squier treaty and wished to renegotiate it; but Carcache had no permission to do so and could not get such permission for at least two months. In the meantime Anglo-American relations were strained by the receipt of news of the British seizure of Tigre Island. High-level negotiations were now imperative and the arrival of Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer as British minister naturally brought about the subordination of United States-Nicaraguan negotiations to Anglo-American negotiations. But the Squier treaty was not forgotten; it became inextricably involved in the Clayton-Bulwer talks. Although never ratified by the United States, the Squier treaty and its assertion of Nicaraguan sovereignty over the line of the canal gave Clayton the weapon he needed to hammer out the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty.

⁶²Eduardo Carcache to Clayton, December 31, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 487; National Intelligencer, December 27, 1849.

CHAPTER III

DIPLOMATIC ADVENTURER: THE SQUIER-CHATFIELD RIVALRY

Having established himself as an unofficial but important adviser to the Nicaraguan government, Squier turned to the problem of extending American influence to the other republics. Guatemala and Costa Rica, the two most important republics commercially, were already pre-empted by Great Britain. In Guatemala Chatfield had surmounted the differences over the Belize boundary to create a remarkably close accord. Still fearing United States southward expansion, which had been demonstrated by the Mexican War, Guatemala's Conservative rulers seemed to look to Great Britain for political and economic guidance. Costa Rica, too, was strongly pro-British, depending on Great Britain for support in its boundary dispute with Nicaragua as well as for a market for the expanding Costa Rican coffee industry.¹

Few friends of the British were to be found, however, in Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador. Great Britain's support of the Mosquito kingdom made Honduran and Nicaraguan hostility virtually inevitable. El Salvador, with no Mosquito border, had not felt that brand of British imperialism, but it had

¹Naylor, "British Commercial Relations with Central America, 1821-1851," 62-69; Chatfield to Palmerston, December 15, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:60.

not escaped the force of British wrath. El Salvador's refusal to pay British claims brought a British blockade of its few ports in 1848, and Chatfield continued to threaten further retaliation. In addition, the three central republics--Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador--were all governed in 1849 by Liberals, who believed the British were arming the Conservatives against them. With Great Britain supporting their political opponents, the three remaining republics had to seek allies elsewhere. When Squier arrived in Central America in 1849 he found the three central republics begging for United States influence to counterbalance the overwhelming dominance of Great Britain.²

Squier believed that the best way to introduce United States influence and subvert British influence in Central America was to induce the five republics to reconstruct the splintered union of the 1820's and 1830's. The fall of the Republic of Central America he ascribed to British intrigues, and since "the confederacy opposed a barrier to their British encroachments on the Atlantic coast," Squier sought to recreate a unified Central American republic as a strong pro-United States, anti-British force. "I have advised," he told Clayton, "that a union for the purpose of maintaining and conducting foreign relations, under a common name, should at once be formed."³ Working with the government of Nicaragua

²For an account of Central American politics of this period, see Hubert H. Bancroft, History of Central America (3 vols., New York, 1883-1887), III, 256-61, 279-81, 297-99, 312-13, 317-19. See also Dana G. Munro, The Five Republics of Central America (New York, 1918), 168.

³Squier to Clayton, August 20, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 353.

he hoped to utilize the Liberal, anti-British ties of the three central republics as a nucleus of union. Guatemala and Costa Rica, he believed, could be enticed to join once the new union had demonstrated its effectiveness.

Squier's entreaties fell on fertile ground. A desire for reunification already existed in Central America. Numerous meetings had been held since 1839, with Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador usually providing the initiative. On August 2, 1849, instigated by Squier, Sebastián Salinas, foreign minister of Nicaragua, invited Honduras and El Salvador to send delegates to another meeting on union to be held in León. The invitation stressed the fact that Squier would be there to discuss "commerce and other interesting matters." By implication Salinas let it be known that the meeting was being held to please Squier, who favored union. Without Squier's good wishes, he hinted, United States protection against Great Britain might not be forthcoming.⁴

The León meeting began with the usual high-sounding phrases respecting the desirability of eternal union and concluded with the usual nebulous paper organization. The agreement signed by the delegates, however, is of some interest for it indicates that fear of Great Britain was probably the most powerful stimulus for this unification effort. Pointedly relying on the protection of the United States, the three countries refused to recognize the validity of the Mosquito protectorate. Taking inspiration from the Monroe Doctrine they also acknowledged "the necessity of upholding,

⁴Correo del Istmo, August 10, 1849, Foreign Office, 15: 59.

in conjunction with the continental Governments and that of the United States the absolute Independence of all foreign influence in the political concerns of the Inhabitants of the new world."⁵ Squier's influence was doubtless responsible for this resolution. Squier did not attend the meetings, but he "conversed freely" with the delegates.⁶

Despite the support of the United States the "Representación Nacional de Centro-América," which was declared in existence by the delegates of the three countries, could not overcome the apathy and localism that have defeated numerous other attempts to confederate Central America. The organization gradually disintegrated without having achieved its object.⁷

Pending the permanent establishment of a unified Central American republic Squier dealt separately with the five countries. Relations between Guatemala and the United States were cool but free from any particular controversy. With no question demanding his presence in Guatemala Squier preferred to remain at León until the ratification of the Squier treaty with Nicaragua. Nevertheless, he stated his intention of transferring his official residence to Guatemala and at one time even directed that his mail be sent to Guatemala City

⁵Quoted in Chatfield to Palmerston, December 24, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:60. See also Montúfar, Reseña histórica de Centro América, VI, 166-67.

⁶Squier to Clayton, November 2, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 434-35.

⁷A full treatment of this general topic is Thomas L. Karnes, "Attempts to Confederate the States of Central America" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1952).

in anticipation of his expected move.⁸ However, he never carried out this intention. Believing that American interests were greater in Nicaragua than in any other Central American country, he maintained his residence in León throughout his mission.⁹

From the first Squier's relations with Costa Rica were almost totally lacking in cordiality. The difficulty stemmed from Squier's early and positive impression that Costa Rica was but a protectorate of Great Britain.¹⁰ The suspicion was not an unreasonable one. Costa Rica had asked for British protection and Chatfield wished to grant it.¹¹ Moreover, Chatfield talked as if it were a settled British policy to protect Costa Rica against all enemies.¹² In reality, however, Costa Rica and Great Britain had not even entered into treaty relations with each other at the time of Squier's arrival in Central America. Lord Palmerston and the British government were unwilling to undertake the responsibility of protecting the republic. Chatfield was authorized only to negotiate a

⁸Joel Squier to Squier, November 30, 1849, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society. See also Gaceta de Guatemala, June 28, 1850.

⁹Squier to Clayton, March [?], 1850. Diplomatic Despatches Guatemala, II, National Archives. This citation is only given when the original is not reproduced in Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence. Otherwise Manning is cited.

¹⁰Squier to Clayton, June 23, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 336.

¹¹Chatfield to Palmerston, October 18, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:60; see also Mary W. Williams, Anglo-American Isthmian Diplomacy, 1815-1915 (Washington, 1916), 71.

¹²Chatfield to Ramírez, December 1, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:60.

simple treaty of commerce.¹³

Costa Rica, in Squier's mind, had already sold itself to the enemy, so diplomacy was unnecessary. As a preliminary to negotiations for a commercial treaty, Squier demanded that Costa Rica declare whether or not it was a protectorate of England and that it define precisely its northern boundaries.¹⁴ He made this move, he said, "to let the intriguants know that we were advised of their proceedings and to break up the system which they were promoting."¹⁵ Joaquín Calvo, Costa Rican foreign minister, in a spirited letter, refused to answer the inquiries. It was not proper, Calvo admonished, for a diplomatic agent to make such inquiries before presenting his credentials.¹⁶

The Costa Rica-Nicaragua boundary question underlay the problem of Costa Rica's relations with Great Britain and the United States. Costa Rica claimed the south bank of the San Juan River to Lake Nicaragua and from the lake to the Pacific Ocean along the line of the Flores River. Nicaragua's claim included both banks of the San Juan River, all of Lake Nicaragua, and territory between the Flores River southward to the Salto de Nicoya River.¹⁷ The proposed canal, according to

¹³Chatfield to Palmerston, November 28, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:60.

¹⁴Squier to Joaquín B. Calvo, Costa Rican foreign minister, August 13, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 342.

¹⁵Squier to Clayton, November 4, 1849, ibid., III, 437.

¹⁶Calvo to Squier, September 20, 1849, ibid., III, 387.

¹⁷E. George Squier, The States of Central America (New York, 1858), 446.

the Nicaraguan claim, would be entirely within the territory of Nicaragua. But if Costa Rica could enforce its claim to the south bank of the San Juan, the canal company would have to get Costa Rica's consent too. Unaffected by the Mosquito encroachment Costa Rica looked to Great Britain for support. Nicaragua looked to the United States. In late 1849 Squier and Chatfield entered the contest, raising it to new heights of bitterness.

Squier reopened the controversy with a thorough and vigorous denunciation of the Costa Rican claim in a letter to Calvo.¹⁸ The Nicaraguans esteemed this statement of their case so highly that they printed it as a broadside addressed A los Centro-Americanos, and circulated it throughout the five republics.¹⁹ The official Costa Rica newspaper denounced Squier's conduct as "improper" and called publication of the letter an example of "diplomatic chicanery."²⁰ Squier's next maneuver, according to Chatfield, was the spreading of a rumor that United States war vessels were on the way to Central America to eject the British from San Juan and to protect Nicaragua.²¹ There may be some truth to this charge. Rumors seemed to crop up around Squier. He himself admitted that the day of his arrival in San Juan "the news was current that

¹⁸ Squier to Calvo, October 1, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 389-93.

¹⁹ A los Centro-Americanos (León, 1849), Foreign Office, 15:60; Squier to editor, January 28, 1853, New York Herald, February 4, 1853.

²⁰ El Costaricense: Semanario Oficial (San José), November 10, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:60.

²¹ Chatfield to Palmerston, January 7, 1850, Foreign Office, 15:64; Chatfield to Bulwer, January 5, 1850, ibid.

six American vessels of war were on their way to San Juan to drive out the English."²² The rumor of impending American aid appeared in Nicaragua again in November,²³ and doubtless reached Chatfield's ears in December or January. Although Squier may not have deliberately started this rumor, it is easy to imagine him speaking as if the United States Navy were on the way to help the beleaguered Nicaraguans. He had asked Clayton for naval support and he had negotiated a treaty with Nicaragua for the protection of the line of the canal. He therefore expected American aid soon, and probably said so.

Squier's interference in the Costa Rica-Nicaragua boundary dispute did not end with the denunciation of Costa Rica's claims. After the Nicaraguan ratification of the Squier treaty he penned another graceless letter to Calvo, in which he informed the foreign minister that Nicaragua was under the protection of the United States. His government, he said, would not recognize any Costa Rican pretensions to the banks of the San Juan or to the shores of Lake Nicaragua.²⁴

Meanwhile, Chatfield was just as active in defense of Costa Rica. His principal object was to bind Costa Rica closer to Great Britain by means of a commercial treaty. He had prepared the ground by preliminary negotiations in Guatemala City in 1848, and in November, 1849, he journeyed to San José to consummate his plan. On November 27, four days

²²Squier, Nicaragua, I, 68.

²³New Orleans Crescent, January 25, January 29, 1850.

²⁴Squier to Calvo, December 19, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 466.

after his arrival, he and the Costa Rican commissioner signed a treaty of "friendship, commerce, and navigation." The Costa Rican legislature immediately ratified it.²⁵ "It is . . . fair to conclude," said Squier, "that by the terms of this treaty, Costa-Rica is placed under the 'protection' of Great Britain, with a view of enacting the same outrages in respect to Nicaragua, under the plea of supporting the rights of Costa-Rica, of which she was guilty under plea of sustaining her 'ancient ally' in Mosquitia."²⁶ Chatfield, too, considered it a treaty of protection: "I have considered it a favorable opportunity to make use of the Treaty signed with this Government on the 27 ulto. and to found on it a right to interfere for the protection of Costarica against the subversive designs of Nicaragua."²⁷ Chatfield warned Nicaragua that relations between Great Britain and Costa Rica were "now placed on a footing that will not admit of any proceeding on the part of Nicaragua, that shall alter the present position of Costarica."²⁸

Both Costa Rica and Nicaragua had assurances of support from powerful allies. But the assurances rested only on the statements of diplomatic agents, not on the calculated policy of the governments the agents represented. Costa Rica and Nicaragua had signed treaties with their respective allies,

²⁵Chatfield to Palmerston, November 28, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:60.

²⁶Squier to Clayton, December 27, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 483.

²⁷Chatfield to Palmerston, December 15, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:60.

²⁸Chatfield to Salinas, December 1, 1849, ibid.

but neither treaty was one of protection, and neither treaty had even been formally ratified and exchanged. The Costa Rica-Nicaragua dispute, exacerbated by the blusterings of Squier and Chatfield, threatened not only the peace of Central America but also the peace between the United States and Great Britain. The bitterness of the dispute added urgency to the Anglo-American attempt to end their dangerous isthmian rivalry.

Another episode in the Squier-Chatfield duel--the Tigre Island affair--provided additional incentive for Great Britain and the United States to settle their differences by negotiation before the situation worsened. Tigre Island, owned by Honduras, lies in the Bay of Fonseca, a deep indentation some one thousand square miles in extent on the Pacific coast of Central America which borders on the three middle states--El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The Bay and Tigre Island, which commands the bay, early attracted the attention of Squier for its potential value as a commercial and naval outpost on the Pacific. The probability that the Nicaragua canal would have its Pacific terminus at the bay increased its importance immeasurably. Squier described it in superlative adjectives. "The Bay of Fonseca," he said, "is, under every point of view, by far the most important position on the Pacific coast of America." "The bay is not only all but much more than has been represented. It is impossible to conceive a finer sheet of water. . . ." ²⁹ "It has, in nearly every part, an abundance of water for the largest ships. . . . The

²⁹Squier to Clayton, March 30, 1850, Diplomatic Despatches, Guatemala, II, National Archives.

entrance may be effected with any wind. . . . the climate is delicious." "In short," he concluded, "nature has here lavished every requisite to make the Bay of Fonseca the great naval centre of the globe."³⁰

Squier's description of the bay could not have surprised Chatfield, who had been describing it in equally laudatory terms for over ten years. Chatfield considered its acquisition a necessity to the maintenance of British dominance in Central America. His zeal largely accounted for two British surveys of the Bay of Fonseca--one by Captain Edward Belcher in 1838 and one by Captain Thomas Henderson in 1847--but to Chatfield's great regret the British government made no move to take possession.³¹ After the British drove the Nicaraguans from San Juan, he believed that it was only natural to complement that action by driving the Hondurans from Tigre. He began to work on his own to establish a British claim to the island in January, 1849. At that time he warned Honduras that "a lien might be put on the Island of Tigre" unless the claims of British residents against the government of Honduras were met.³² His proposals were protested by Honduras and ignored by his own government. Palmerston, however, had repeatedly informed Chatfield that Great Britain did not wish to acquire Tigre.³³

³⁰Squier, Nicaragua, II, 167-68.

³¹Squier, States of Central America, 98; Thomas Henderson to Chatfield, December 17, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:45.

³²Chatfield to Francisco Ferrer, January 26, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:57.

³³For example, Palmerston to Chatfield, June 17, 1848, Foreign Office, 15:50; Palmerston to Chatfield, March 30, 1850, Foreign Office, 15:63.

In early August, 1849, Squier got wind of a proposed British punitive expedition to the Pacific coast of Central America. At first he thought the British aim was to enforce payment of British claims by Honduras and El Salvador, but by mid-August he was convinced that the object of the expedition was to seize Tigre Island. He at once despatched a courier to President Francisco Ferrer of Honduras, asking that a commissioner be sent to León to treat with him to avert the impending catastrophe. He hoped to negotiate a treaty between Honduras and the United States, "the provisions of which shall authorize the United States in interposing its power against the designs of the English."³⁴

In response to Squier's urgent solicitation Ferrer sent José Guerrero, a former president of Honduras, to León. On September 28, Squier and Guerrero signed "A General Treaty of Amity, Navigation and Commerce," establishing a basis for the commercial relations between Honduras and the United States. By this treaty, according to Squier, the United States "acquired interests in the Western islands and coasts of Honduras, which will not permit her to look with indifference upon any measures which shall affect the present order of things in that quarter."³⁵ As in the Nicaraguan treaty, the significant provisions appeared in Article 35. In that article Honduras granted the United States the right of way

³⁴Squier to Francisco Ferrer, August 16, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 344-45; Squier to Clayton, October 11, 1849, ibid., 402-403.

³⁵Squier to Joseph W. Livingston, September 28, 1849, enclosed in Chatfield to Palmerston, October 17, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:60.

over any transportation facility that might be constructed across Honduras. In addition, it provided that the United States could "establish a Naval Station, Depot, and Ship Yard" on Tigre Island or on any Honduran territory on the Bay of Fonseca. In return the United States guaranteed "positively and efficaciously the entire neutrality of the same."³⁶

These provisions, Squier hoped, would ultimately insure the establishment of a United States naval and canal base on Tigre Island. To avert the immediate threat of British occupation he deemed more drastic action necessary. Consequently, in a "protocol" appended to the treaty Squier and Guerrero agreed to the immediate cession of Tigre to the United States for a period of eighteen months or until the ratification or rejection of the treaty. The cession was to be accomplished by a Honduran decree turning the island over to the "principal diplomatic officer" of the United States in Central America.³⁷ In his haste to make the transaction known, however, Squier did not wait for the decree. He sent a circular to all diplomatic agents in Central America, announcing the cession.³⁸ By this bold move Squier hoped to upset Chatfield's plan to seize Tigre by force. With the impending cession of the island to the United States known to the general public, he believed,

³⁶Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 399 n.-400 n.

³⁷Ibid., 401 n. The Squier-Guerrero negotiations are discussed briefly in Pedro Rivas, Monografía geográfica e histórica de la Isla del Tigre y puerto de Amapala (Tegucigalpa, 1934), 139. See also New Orleans Price-Current, December 5, 1849.

³⁸Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 403 n.

Chatfield would not risk an international incident by carrying out his plans for the seizure.

Squier had moved quickly, but not quickly enough. On October 16, Captain James A. Paynter of H.M.S. Gorgon, with Chatfield on board, "took formal possession of the Island of Tigre and its dependencies."³⁹ It seems certain that Chatfield knew of the treaty ceding the island to the United States, although he reported to his government that he acted without having heard of Squier's move.⁴⁰ The Squier-Guerrero treaty and the circular were dated September 28. Chatfield was then on his way from Guatemala City to the Bay of Fonseca to meet the Gorgon at La Unión, the principal Salvadoran port on the bay, and may have missed Squier's circular. But the Gorgon stopped at Realejo, Nicaragua, October 13, to pick up John Foster, British consul at Realejo and Thomas Manning, British consul at León, both of whom certainly knew of the Squier-Guerrero negotiations.⁴¹ Foster and Manning would not have failed to inform Chatfield of these proceedings when they met him at La Unión before the seizure.

Squier claimed that his plans to confront the British with a United States flag over Tigre were spoiled by a flood. Squier intended to leave León for Tigre to take possession as soon as the Honduran decree providing for the cession arrived. President Ferrer signed the decree on October 9.

³⁹Captain James A. Paynter to Chatfield, October 16, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:60.

⁴⁰Chatfield to Palmerston, December 15, 1849, ibid.

⁴¹Squier to Clayton, October 25, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 420.

Unfortunately for Squier's plan, the government courier bearing the decree drowned in a flood on his way to León. Squier thus did not get official word of Honduran acceptance of the Squier-Guerrero protocol until late October.⁴² By that time Tigre had already fallen to Captain Paynter.

Whether Chatfield would have ordered the seizure of Tigre if the United States flag had been flying over it is conjectural. But the evidence suggests that Chatfield did not intend to seize Tigre at all until he learned of Squier's plan to acquire the island by formal cession. Chatfield knew of course that his government did not want Tigre, and as late as August, 1849, Admiral Phipps Hornby, commander of the British Pacific squadron, having been sent a copy of Chatfield's instructions, specifically reminded him of this fact. Hornby, who remained in Valparaiso, ordered Captain Paynter only to blockade Salvadoran ports; he did not order the capture of Tigre, nor even the blockade of Honduran ports.⁴³ The plan of the punitive expedition called for the Atlantic squadron to blockade Honduras' more vital Atlantic ports (Omoa and Truxillo), and for the Pacific squadron to blockade El Salvador's ports on the Bay of Fonseca. The purpose of the expedition was to act in concert to enforce the collection of

⁴²Squier to commander of United States Pacific squadron, October 24, 1849, Diplomatic Despatches, Guatemala, II, National Archives.

⁴³Admiral Phipps Hornby to Chatfield, August 6, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:60. Even as late as September 22, Chatfield said, "the only business on hand which may require coercive measures is that pending with the Govt of Salvador." Chatfield to Hornby, September 22, 1849, *ibid.*

British claims against the two countries.⁴⁴ Captain Matthew S. Nolloth of H.M.S. Plumper carried out the Atlantic part of the expedition by blockading Truxillo on the morning of October 4. He collected \$1200 from the frightened citizens in return for a promise not to bombard the town.⁴⁵ The Pacific squadron, however, was diverted from its original purpose by Chatfield, who ordered it to be used against Honduras's chief Pacific possession, Tigre Island, as well as against El Salvador's ports.

Chatfield's decision to seize Tigre, to which Captain Paynter readily agreed, was probably made in consequence of the Squier-Guerrero protocol.⁴⁶ Squier thought he was acting to forestall Chatfield, but Chatfield was really acting, against the policy of his own government, to forestall Squier. Chatfield snatched the island by force to prevent its falling peacefully into Squier's hands. In so doing, he won only the first round of the Tigre affair.

Squier had no naval force at his disposal. He could do nothing but protest.⁴⁷ When Chatfield ignored the protest

⁴⁴Chatfield to Palmerston, July 24, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:59; Montúfar, Reseña histórica, VI, 199. Montúfar's view that the British seizure of Tigre was a British-Servile plot to wreck the union of Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua limits, but does not destroy, the value of his account.

⁴⁵Captain Matthew S. Nolloth to Commodore Thomas Bennett, October 13, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:62; José María Moncada, Honduran minister of foreign affairs, to Chatfield, October 17, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 430 n.; New Orleans Delta, January 7, 1850.

⁴⁶Joseph B. Lockey, "Journal of a Visit to Central America" (unpublished manuscript in University of Florida Library, Gainesville), 77; Bulwer to Clayton, February 7, 1850, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, VII, 350.

⁴⁷Squier to Chatfield, October 23, 1849, ibid., III, 416 n.

Squier sent him an ultimatum: "Unless the island . . . is evacuated within 6 days from the receipt of this communication, the persistance [sic] in occupation will be considered an act of aggression and hostility against the United States."⁴⁸

Chatfield took no notice of it. While Squier rent the León air with denunciations of Chatfield and the British, Chatfield quietly extracted a promise from El Salvador to pay British claims and left on board the Gorgon for Costa Rica. A force of some fifty men remained on Tigre Island to guard against any Honduran scheme to retake it.⁴⁹

Chatfield's satisfaction at having rendered a great service to Great Britain by preventing the fall of Tigre into American hands was shattered by the news that Admiral Hornby, who was responsible to his government for the Gorgon, disavowed Chatfield's seizure of Tigre. Knowing Palmerston's feeling on the matter, Hornby, without referring the matter to his superiors, ordered Captain Paynter to restore the island to Honduras. Captain Paynter and the Gorgon returned to the Bay of Fonseca on December 26, 1849, and withdrew the British garrison, firing a twenty-one gun salute to the Honduras flag as an apology.⁵⁰ To this blow to Chatfield's reputation of omnipotence was added a formal though mild

⁴⁸Squier to Chatfield, November 2, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 431 n.

⁴⁹José Guerrero to Squier, November 28, 1849, ibid., 451; Chatfield to Palmerston, November 13, 1849, Foreign Office, 15:60.

⁵⁰Paynter to Santos Guardiola, December 26, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 489; Juan Cáceres to Squier, December 26, 1849, ibid., 488; New Orleans Delta, February 25, 1850.

rebuke from Lord Palmerston: "although H.M. Govt duly appreciate [sic] the motives and the zeal for the public service which induced you to take this step, yet upon general principle H.M.'s Govt considers it to have been a measure which ought not to have been taken without specific instructions from hence."⁵¹

It was Squier's turn to exult. To his parents and to Clayton Squier boasted of having driven the English from Tigre and of having established a new era of United States influence in Central America.⁵² The New Orleans Delta, copying a letter from a León correspondent (probably Squier himself), commented: "The prompt and energetic action of Mr. Squier caused the restoration of Tigre Island."⁵³

When Squier learned of the withdrawal of the British garrison from Tigre, he began to hope that the island could yet be brought under American control. He tried repeatedly to convince Clayton of the desirability of acquiring Tigre, but without success.⁵⁴ The Secretary of State repudiated Squier's treaty with Honduras upon receiving it and informed

⁵¹Palmerston to Chatfield, January 17, 1850, Foreign Office, 15:63.

⁵²Squier to parents, January 6, 1850, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society. Squier to Clayton, December 31, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 488.

⁵³New Orleans Delta, February 25, 1850. According to Juan de Lima, a Nicaraguan, it was Squier's "energetic protests" that forced Great Britain to withdraw. New York Herald, May 13, 1857.

⁵⁴Squier to Clayton, February 10, 1850, February 13, 1850, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 502, 503, Squier to Clayton, January 5, 1850, March [?], 1850, Diplomatic Despatches, Guatemala, II, National Archives.

both Squier and Bulwer of his decision.⁵⁵ Afterwards, when news of the British seizure reached Washington, Clayton threatened to resurrect the Honduras treaty and send it to the Senate,⁵⁶ but the speedy British disavowal made this action unnecessary. Despite the official repudiation of Squier's treaty with Honduras, and the continuing dismissal of his representations concerning Tigre, Squier dealt with Honduras as if the matter were still pending. Fearing that the British were planning another attack on the island and hoping that Clayton could yet be convinced of the correctness of his views, Squier withheld from Honduras the news that Clayton had repudiated the treaty ceding Tigre to the United States.

Squier became particularly concerned when news reached him that Admiral Hornby was planning a personal visit to Central American waters. Fearing for the safety of Tigre, Squier hurried to the Bay of Fonseca to be on guard against any British attempt to retake the island. He arrived in late March, 1850, a few days after Hornby's arrival. Hornby had come, in his own words, "to observe personally the state of our relations with the various governments of Central America."⁵⁷ In the absence of Chatfield, who was then on his way from

⁵⁵Clayton to Squier, November 20, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 55; Bulwer to Palmerston, January 6, 1850, Miller (ed.), Treaties and other International Acts, V, 741.

⁵⁶Clayton to Lawrence, December 29, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, VII, 58.

⁵⁷Hornby to Rafael Pino, Salvadoran foreign minister, March 20, 1850, ibid., III, 515 n. See also Squier to Clayton, May 7, 1850, ibid., 530-31.

Costa Rica to Jamaica, Hornby asserted British claims in a manner reminiscent of the absent chargé d'affaires. As Squier feared, Hornby threatened to retake Tigre Island if Honduras refused to ratify a treaty promising payment of British claims.⁵⁸ Squier met the threat by firing off an immediate warning to Hornby. "It cannot be unknown to you," he declared, "that this island was formally ceded to the U.S. on the 28th of Sept. last, which cession has been virtually accepted by the Govt. of the United States."⁵⁹ Then, on April 2, borrowing a United States flag from the friendly captain of the French corvette, La Sérieuse, which happened to be in the Bay of Fonseca, Squier had the flag raised over Tigre Island as a symbol of United States authority.⁶⁰ If Hornby really had any intention to reoccupy Tigre, the warning and the presence of the United States flag apparently dissuaded him, for he withdrew almost immediately, leaving Squier in possession.

The cession of Tigre to the United States was of course not "virtually accepted" by the United States, as Squier claimed; Clayton had already repudiated the Squier-Guerrero

⁵⁸Hornby to Z. M. Rojas, Honduran foreign minister, March 25, 1850, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 517 n.; David T. Brown to Squier, March 19, 1850, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵⁹Squier to Hornby, March 31, 1850, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 530 n. Despite a rather brisk official correspondence, Squier and Hornby were apparently on friendly terms. Squier called Hornby "a moderate man" and a "model of the frank and hearty sailor." Squier to Clayton, March 30, 1850, ibid., 519; Squier, Nicaragua, II, 191. See also Hornby to Squier, March 26, 1850, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶⁰Hornby to Chatfield, April 6, 1850, Foreign Office, 15:64; Eusebio Craesma to Squier, April 2, 1850, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 531 n.

protocol. Finally, in June, after receiving a copy of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, Squier informed the Honduras government that the new treaty rendered the Squier-Guerrero protocol "no longer necessary," and asked that the United States flag be considered withdrawn from Tigre.⁶¹ Squier was then in San Juan on his way back to the United States.

The increasing tension created by the activities of the two zealous diplomatic agents caused both Great Britain and the United States serious concern. The Squier treaty with Nicaragua, the Nicaragua-Costa Rica quarrel, and the Tigre affair found the two powers in sharp disagreement, drifting toward hostility. As Bulwer saw it, the situation contained "if not the seeds of actual war, the seeds of such hostile and angry excitement, as render war always possible." He believed that the controversy should be settled before it grew worse.⁶² Clayton, pressed by domestic ills and badgered by Congress for the diplomatic correspondence relating to Central America, was anxious to come to an agreement.⁶³

The activities of Squier and Chatfield had not caused the Anglo-American controversy. The differences already

⁶¹Squier to José María Rugama, Honduran foreign minister, June 24, 1850, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 535. The flag, however, was not ordered removed until January, 1851, after a gentle protest from Bulwer. Bulwer to Daniel Webster, December 31, 1850, ibid., VII, 429; Webster to Bulwer, January 10, 1851, ibid., 68.

⁶²Bulwer to Palmerston, February 18, 1850, Miller (ed.), Treaties and other International Acts, V, 752.

⁶³Williams, Anglo-American Isthmian Diplomacy, 89-91; Williams, "John Middleton Clayton," in Bemis (ed.), American Secretaries of State, VI, 49-51, 53; U.S., Congressional Globe, 31 Cong., 1st Sess., 159.

existed. The two agents came into conflict trying to mark out and extend interests of their respective countries where those interests had heretofore not been sharply defined. Each was stimulated by a desire for imperialistic expansion and each went further than his government was willing to go. Their rivalry proved that discord was certain unless a settlement was found. Even before their activities became generally known Clayton had initiated steps to adjust the differences. He had instructed George Bancroft, United States minister to Great Britain, to sound out British intentions, and if the situation warranted, he wished Bancroft's successor, Abbott Lawrence, to negotiate a treaty guaranteeing the proposed Nicaragua canal.⁶⁴ When the Lawrence-Palmerston talks deadlocked over the Mosquito question, negotiations were transferred to Washington. The new British minister to the United States, Henry Lytton Bulwer, reached Washington in December, 1849, and began negotiations immediately.⁶⁵

Clayton had a definite plan in mind for the negotiations. He proposed to conclude a treaty with Great Britain promising to protect the canal project. He thought it necessary also for both the United States and Great Britain to sign separate treaties with Nicaragua guaranteeing the canal. On the Mosquito question he held firm views. He had investigated the "claim set up by the British Government, nominally in behalf of his Mosquito Majesty" and had concluded that it had

⁶⁴Clayton to George Bancroft, May 2, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, VII, 34; Clayton to Lawrence, October 20, 1849, ibid., 40-52.

⁶⁵Williams, "John Middleton Clayton," in Bemis (ed.), American Secretaries of State, VI, 53-54.

"no reasonable foundation." He therefore hoped to induce Great Britain to abandon the Mosquito protectorate.⁶⁶

By the time the negotiations got under way Clayton already had an important bargaining point in the Squier treaty with Nicaragua. This instrument, in providing for exclusive American control of the canal, went much further than Clayton wished. Clayton preferred the partnership idea. He did not want an exclusively American canal; he wanted equality with Great Britain. But it did not matter that Clayton was not entirely satisfied with the Squier treaty; if Great Britain refused to co-operate he would submit it to the Senate and call for its ratification.⁶⁷ Great Britain objected to the Squier treaty because it disputed Mosquito sovereignty over the town of San Juan and it provided for American control of the canal company. To eliminate the objectionable treaty, according to the Clayton plan, all Great Britain had to do was to submit to the partnership idea and abandon the Mosquito protectorate.

⁶⁶Clayton to Squier, May 1, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 49; Clayton to Squier, October 25, 1849, ibid., 54. See also Williams, "John Middleton Clayton," in Bemis (ed.), American Secretaries of State, VII, 49.

⁶⁷Clayton to Bulwer, January 1, 1850, Miller (ed.), Treaties and other International Acts, V, 740. In 1853, when Clayton was being criticized for not having driven the British out of Central America, Clayton put a slightly different interpretation on his use of the Squier treaty as a threat. He said: "It was a threat, if you please, that if the British Government continued to occupy Central America as they had done, and should refuse to yield us the right of passage through the isthmus on equal terms with them, then we would submit . . . some treaty to the Senate which would grant us the right of way on the most favorable terms, without regard to the interests of Great Britain." U.S., Congressional Globe, 32 Cong., 3d Sess., Appendix, 278.

Although not fully instructed on the Central American question, Bulwer quickly sized up the situation and formulated his strategy. Realizing Clayton's anxiety for a settlement and the American public's desire for a treaty facilitating a canal, Bulwer decided to push the canal question to the forefront. Great Britain had no wish to dominate the proposed canal and was quite willing to guarantee it in partnership with the United States. But on the Mosquito question Palmerston was adamant; he would not abandon the protectorate. Bulwer therefore resolved to avoid the discordant views on Mosquito and build an accord on the two countries' harmonious views on the canal.⁶⁸ To do so he had to obstruct the ratification of the Squier treaty, which emphasized the two countries' differences.

Early in the negotiations Bulwer seems to have extracted a promise from Clayton to withhold the Squier treaty from the Senate. Clayton at least suspended further consideration of the treaty while studying Bulwer's first proposals. The treaty, however, was not abandoned. Clayton told Squier that the treaty was unacceptable, but he did not instruct him to renegotiate it. The Nicaraguan minister, Carcache, who was in Washington soliciting ratification of the Squier treaty, was put off with the suggestion that he return to Nicaragua to ask for greater powers.⁶⁹ The Squier treaty was thus held

⁶⁸Ira D. Travis, The History of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty ("Publications of the Michigan Political Science Association," Vol. III, No. 8; Ann Arbor, 1900), 112-13. See also Bulwer to Clayton, April 9, 1850, Miller (ed.), Treaties and other International Acts, V, 767.

⁶⁹Clayton to Carcache, February 5, 1850, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 59.

in reserve. It did not meet Clayton's wishes, but the Secretary of State did not want it modified until the outcome of the Washington negotiations became known.

Scarcely had Clayton and Bulwer begun their talks when news of Chatfield's seizure of Tigre arrived in Washington. Although the American press (judging from a few important newspapers) did not seem overly aroused,⁷⁰ Clayton showed much concern over Chatfield's act. "The British Government," he said, "must make the first explanations to us and disavow all his acts extending British jurisdiction and they must agree to withdraw from all occupation of Tigre island before we proceed any further. If they do not I shall submit the Honduras treaty to the Senate."⁷¹ Bulwer quickly eased the tension, however, by predicting a formal disavowal.⁷²

Oddly enough, it was the official British disavowal that nearly wrecked the Clayton-Bulwer negotiations. By February 2, 1850, the two negotiators had agreed on a preliminary projet and Bulwer had sent it to London for Palmerston's approval. Before Palmerston's acceptance was released the official disavowal of the Tigre seizure reached the United States and was printed in the newspapers. It created a decidedly bad

⁷⁰National Intelligencer, December 15, 1849; New Orleans Crescent, December 29, 1849; New Orleans Delta, December 24, 1849; John R. Bartlett to Squier, January 31, 1850, Daniel Embury to Squier, December 12, 1849, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

⁷¹Clayton to Lawrence, December 26, 1849 (private), Miller (ed.), Treaties and other International Acts, V, 739.

⁷²Williams, "John Middleton Clayton," in Bemis (ed.), American Secretaries of State, VI, 64; Hamilton, Zachary Taylor: Soldier in the White House, 359.

impression.⁷³ Palmerston stated merely that Chatfield had acted without instructions, but that the British government reserved the right to collect its debts in this way.⁷⁴ Thus Chatfield's act was disavowed because it was carried out without instructions; the next seizure might bear the approval of the British government. This caused such serious concern about British intentions that the negotiations were dropped, and on March 19, 1850, the Squier treaty was submitted to the Senate.⁷⁵ The Taylor administration had apparently decided that co-operation with Great Britain was impossible and had concluded to seek an exclusively American canal.

Bulwer was shocked at what he considered Clayton's breach of faith. But he did not believe the Squier treaty beyond his grasp.⁷⁶ He persuaded Clayton to renew their talks and by early April he had overcome Clayton's reluctance by suggesting the inclusion of stronger negative terms in the treaty draft. Meanwhile the Squier treaty lay in committee unacted upon. Clayton had apparently asked the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to table the Squier treaty while he tried again to get what he wanted from Bulwer.⁷⁷ On

⁷³Bulwer to Palmerston, March 16, 1850, Miller (ed.), Treaties and other International Acts, V, 757.

⁷⁴Palmerston to Lawrence, February 13, 1850, ibid., 757.

⁷⁵James D. Richardson (comp.), A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897, V (Washington, 1899), 39.

⁷⁶Bulwer to Clayton, April 9, 1850, Miller (ed.), Treaties and other International Acts, V, 767.

⁷⁷Daniel Webster to Millard Fillmore, August 12, 1852, J. W. McIntyre (ed.), The Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster, XIV (Boston, 1903), 491.

April 19, 1850, one month after the Squier treaty was submitted to the Senate, the two negotiators signed the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty.

The final product of the four months of tedious negotiations closely resembled Bulwer's original plan.⁷⁸ It emphasized the canal, which was to be guaranteed by both parties. Joint protection was specifically granted the American Atlantic and Pacific Ship-Canal Company, but in an effort to establish the principle of partnership, protection was promised to any other isthmian route. In the most widely quoted clause neither Great Britain nor the United States promised ever to

obtain or maintain for itself any exclusive control over the said Ship-Canal; agreeing that neither will ever erect or maintain any fortifications commanding the same, or in the vicinity thereof, or occupy, or fortify, or colonize, or assume or exercise any dominion over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito Coast, or any part of Central America.⁷⁹

The Mosquito protectorate was not mentioned. Clayton was satisfied, however, that the above quoted clause had disarmed it, since Great Britain could not occupy or colonize any part of Central America.⁸⁰ Palmerston and Bulwer, on the other hand, believed that the status of the protectorate remained

⁷⁸John Bigelow, Breaches of Anglo-American Treaties: A Study in History and Diplomacy (New York, 1917), 79-90. Bigelow prints the Bulwer project and the final treaty side by side in double column pages for easy comparison.

⁷⁹Miller (ed.), Treaties and other International Acts, V, 671-72.

⁸⁰Clayton to Squier, May 7, 1850, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 60.

unchanged.⁸¹

President Taylor, upon submitting the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty to the Senate for ratification, admitted that it conflicted with the Squier treaty already before the Senate. A vote in favor of the former would commit the United States to the principle of neutral isthmian transit; a vote in favor of the latter would pit the United States against Great Britain in a race for exclusive control. The President left it up to the Senate to decide which treaty the country should adopt, saying he would put into effect whichever treaty the Senate should choose.⁸² Clayton assured Bulwer that the Senate would surely not ratify both treaties without modification. On May 22, 1850, the Senate ratified the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty by a vote of forty-two to eleven. The Squier treaty was never brought out of committee.⁸³

Although the Squier treaty never came to a vote in the Senate, it served the administration in an important way. It showed clearly that the United States did not intend to be excluded from any isthmian route. It was something to fall back on, if co-operation with Great Britain proved impossible. As Clayton put it, "We should have been perfectly justified in endeavoring to exclude her [Great Britain], if . . . she intended to exclude us."⁸⁴ The Squier treaty was not exactly

⁸¹Richard W. Van Alstyne, "British Diplomacy and the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, 1850-60," Journal of Modern History, XI (June, 1939), 158.

⁸²Richardson (comp.), Messages of the Presidents, V, 43.

⁸³Miller (ed.), Treaties and other International Acts, V, 680.

⁸⁴U.S., Congressional Globe, 32 Cong. 3d Sess., Appendix, 278.

what Clayton wanted but he did not abandon it until he was convinced of Great Britain's willingness to co-operate. The threat of ratification of the Squier treaty did not induce Great Britain to abandon the Mosquito protectorate, but it probably did induce Great Britain to allow the protectorate to be reduced to a shadow by the qualifications of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. The importance of the Squier treaty lies in the fact that it made Great Britain realize that if she did not co-operate with the United States on the canal question and if she did not weaken the Mosquito protectorate it might face exclusion from isthmian transit or at least face a dangerous and costly rivalry for supremacy on the isthmus.

With the United States and Great Britain committed to co-operation it became essential to reduce or eliminate the bitter personal rivalry of the two countries' diplomatic representatives in Central America. Bulwer had made such an observation much earlier. In January, 1850, Bulwer suggested to Clayton that joint instructions be sent to Squier and Chatfield advising them "to lend each other mutual assistance" instead of "placing themselves at the head of rival parties."⁸⁵ Clayton made no written reply to the suggestion and took no immediate action. Palmerston, on the other hand, on March 8, 1850, instructed Chatfield to "take every opportunity of cooperating with the Agents of the United States in order to place United States-Great Britain

⁸⁵Bulwer to Palmerston, January 6, 1850, Miller (ed.), Treaties and other International Acts, V, 742-43.

relations in Central America on a basis of friendship."⁸⁶ Finally, after the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty was safely ratified, Clayton drafted similar instructions to Squier. "Deal gently and kindly in all your intercourse both with British subjects and British agents," Clayton warned. "Let nothing be done to irritate the British Government. . . . let there be no exultation on our side at the expense of British pride, or sensibility."⁸⁷ Recall of the agents, although widely rumored in the newspapers,⁸⁸ was apparently not seriously considered. The intrepid diplomacy of Squier and Chatfield at times caused their governments concern, but their boldness was recognized as an asset and while Clayton and Palmerston were still in office, Squier and Chatfield held their posts.

The post-Tigre calm was not to Squier's taste. He became bored. In March, 1850, he asked for a leave of absence, claiming that he needed to return to the United States to purchase scientific instruments and that he could tell Clayton in a single conversation more about the British in Central

⁸⁶Palmerston to Chatfield, March 8, 1850, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, VII, 391 n.-392 n.

⁸⁷Clayton to Squier, May 7, 1850, ibid., III, 60.

⁸⁸New Orleans Crescent, January 26, 1850; New Orleans Delta, May 20, 1850; National Intelligencer, January 14, 1851; Squier to Clayton, March 22, 1850, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 514; N. L. Roberts to Squier, December 5, 1849, Squier Papers, Library of Congress. The erroneous impression that Squier returned to the United States because he was recalled persists in secondary accounts. See, for example, Van Alstyne, "British Diplomacy and the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, 1850-60," Journal of Modern History, XI (June, 1939), 165.

America than he could write in a month.⁸⁹ The request was granted and in June, 1850, he took leave of his many Nicaraguan friends and started homeward. He had been in Central America exactly one year and twenty days.

Arriving in the United States he found the country shaken by the death of President Taylor on July 9. The succession to the presidency of Millard Fillmore and the presence of Daniel Webster as Secretary of State spelled the end of Squier's diplomatic career. He continued to plan to return to Central America at the end of his three-months leave, but in September he was informed that a new man was being sent to Central America to replace him.⁹⁰ Squier immediately charged that Bulwer was responsible for his dismissal, but in the absence of contrary evidence, there is no reason to go beyond Webster's antipathy to Squier's reckless approach to foreign policy in seeking motivation for the decision to drop Squier from the diplomatic corps. Webster was strongly opposed to any support of Nicaragua, especially against Great Britain, and Squier was too closely identified with a policy of protection of Nicaragua to remain as Webster's representative in Central America.⁹¹

⁸⁹Squier to Clayton, March [?], 1850, Diplomatic Despatches, Guatemala, II, National Archives. His boredom he revealed to his parents. Squier to parents, February 10, 1850, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society. See also Squier to Clayton, May 8, 1850 (private), in Mary W. Williams (ed.), "Letters of E. George Squier to John M. Clayton, 1849-1850," Hispanic American Historical Review, I (November, 1918), 429-31.

⁹⁰Squier to Webster, September 18, 1850, Diplomatic Despatches, Guatemala, II, National Archives.

⁹¹New York Tribune, October 1, 1850; National Intelligencer, October 5, 1850. See also, "Mr. E. G. Squier, Chargé d'Affaires, Central America," American Review, VI, n.s. (October, 1850), 346. For Webster's attitude see Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, 1826-1867, 213-14.

Squier left the diplomatic service in September, 1850. The important question of how much he was to be paid for his services, however, lingered for ten more years. Seemingly, it was a simple matter. His salary was \$4,500 per year, and as was the established custom in the United States diplomatic corps, he received an "outfit" stipend of an additional \$4,500 to defray the expenses of transferring residence to his remote assignment. Before his departure Squier received this \$9,000, most of which he did not need and so left in the care of his father.⁹² Upon his removal from office Squier assumed that he would be paid the customary "infit" of approximately \$1,200 to re-establish his residence in the United States.⁹³ But as he was already in the United States at the time of his removal, the State Department declined to pay the infit. When Squier remonstrated, the State Department ruled that Squier could have either the infit (\$1,200) or approximately one-fifth of his annual salary for the second year (\$1,000). He naturally took the former, but he claimed that both the salary and the infit were due him.⁹⁴ Thus, Squier collected \$13,500 for the eighteen months from the time of his appointment to the time of his dismissal.

The matter did not end there. Sometime in 1857 he became convinced that he could collect not only the salary that had been denied him, but also for outfits to every country with

⁹²Squier to parents, April 5, 1849, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

⁹³Francis Markoe to Squier, October 16, 1850, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

⁹⁴U.S., Congressional Globe, 35 Cong., 2d Sess., 1106.

which he had conducted negotiations. Since he negotiated (or at least communicated) with all four Central American republics in addition to Guatemala this would amount to a total of \$19,000. Squier coolly memorialized Congress for this exorbitant sum. The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations reported in favor of a compensation of \$4,500 but the Senate, in February, 1859, defeated it 28 to 21.⁹⁵ Squier's claim for additional compensation, described by Representative Edward J. Morris, himself once a Taylor diplomatic appointee, as "one of the most meritorious claims that ever came before the Committee on Foreign Affairs," appeared before Congress again in 1860.⁹⁶ This time it was successful. On June 22, 1860, Congress, not questioning statements made on the floor of the Senate that Squier traveled to all five Central American capitals and negotiated treaties with all five governments, authorized the Treasury Department to pay Squier \$9,937.⁹⁷ The sum apparently represents two outfits of \$4,500 each and \$937 in salary from June 28 to September 13, 1850.

It thus cost the United States government a total of \$23,437 to send Squier on his one-year mission to Central America. There existed ample precedent for this abuse of the loosely organized salary system of the State Department. For example, Squier's good friend and one of the ablest diplomats

⁹⁵U.S., Congressional Globe, 35 Cong., 2d Sess., 1107, 1109.

⁹⁶Ibid., 36 Cong., 1st Sess., 3221.

⁹⁷Ibid., 3220-21, 3240-42; U.S., Statutes at Large, XII (1859-1863), 870.

of the mid-nineteenth century, George P. Marsh, minister to Turkey, collected \$9,000 in 1860 on a similar claim.⁹⁸ Legislation in 1856 abolishing the outfit-infit practice and raising salaries closed the loophole allowing such abuses, but Squier's claim was apparently judged on the basis of precedent antedating the new law. Congress, according to Squier's friend, Senator Henry B. Anthony, could not "allow this poor fellow to be crushed between the law and the precedent."⁹⁹

That Squier made an unseemly profit from his diplomatic mission should not obscure the fact that he performed an important service. His news-making exploits in combating British influence in Central America focused attention on the area. Squier helped to convince the people of the United States of their vital interest in an area they knew little about. He helped to convince Great Britain that the era of American "diplomatic futility" was past and that in the future it must make way for the rising power of the United States. In addition, Squier established American influence in Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua as a counterbalance to British influence in Guatemala and Costa Rica. The changed international atmosphere made the negotiation of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty possible. This treaty, although much

⁹⁸U.S., Statutes at Large, XII (1859-1863), 857; Caroline C. Marsh, Life and Letters of George Perkins Marsh (New York, 1888), 366-67.

⁹⁹U.S., Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 1st Sess., 3241. For discussion of the law of 1856 see Graham H. Stuart, The Department of State: A History of its Organization, Procedure, and Personnel (New York, 1949), 121; Tracy H. Lay, The Foreign Service of the United States (New York, 1925), 14-16.

[criticized, even by Squier, because it limited the possibili-
ties of American expansion southward, was actually a recogni-
tion by Great Britain of the establishment of United States
influence in Central America. Without Squier it is difficult
to see how such a recognition could have occurred so soon in
the history of Anglo-American relations.]

CHAPTER IV

PROMOTER: THE HONDURAS INTEROCEANIC RAILWAY PROJECT

The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty cleared away the diplomatic obstacles to the construction of an isthmian canal, but the natural obstacles remained. Because of the great cost of a canal the American Atlantic and Pacific Ship-Canal Company, favored by an exclusive contract with Nicaragua and by the direct sanction of Great Britain and the United States, was unable to carry through its first objective. When a surveying expedition reported that the cost of a canal deep enough for most ships would be prohibitive the company abandoned the ambitious canal idea for the more modest expedient of establishing a line of transportation across Nicaragua by steamboat and stagecoach. In August, 1852, New York-to-California passengers used the new Nicaragua facilities for the first time.¹

The new system, however, provided merely another competitive route to the Pacific coast; it did not solve the problem of interoceanic transportation. Squier, therefore, began to consider a railway venture which he believed would supersede all other routes.

In 1852, when Squier first began to consider entering

¹Bancroft, Central America, III, 668; Scroggs, Filibusters and Financiers, 79-80.

the transisthmian transportation competition, there were already four principal ways to get to California and the Pacific coast. A California-bound traveler could take the slow, wearying land route across the continent, but the overland journey from Independence, Missouri to San Francisco might take from May to September. Or he could take the five-months' (or more) sea voyage around Cape Horn, risking all before capricious sail or as yet unperfected steam. Or a traveler, an intrepid one, could take the Panama route, placing himself at the mercy of wily natives, rickety cayucos (small dugouts), and debilitating tropical fevers. In 1852, before the Panama railroad was completed, he might make the trip from New York to California via Panama in as little as thirty to forty days--if he could get all his baggage across the isthmus, if he could catch a ship bound for California on the other side, and if he could afford it.² Completion of the Panama railroad in 1855 eliminated many of the annoying delays and discomforts of this route.³ The Nicaragua route, though it provided competition for a brief period, became embroiled in the filibustering adventures of William Walker and the problem of disputed ownership of transit rights and soon dropped from the competition.⁴ During the 1850's, especially after the Panama railroad began operating, most paying

²John H. Kemble, The Panama Route, 1848-1869 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1943), 1-2.

³Fessenden N. Otis, Isthmus of Panama: History of the Panama Railroad; and of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company (New York, 1867), 36, 62, 139.

⁴Lane, Commodore Vanderbilt, 87-88; Scroggs, Filibusters and Financiers, 80-81.

travelers chose the Panama route.⁵

None of the routes to California satisfied the demand. They were expensive, time-consuming, and sometimes dangerous. The opportunity remained for someone to make a fortune by providing more convenient transportation to California, and promoters of canals, railroads, and even ship railways schemed to make money from travelers to and from the land of gold. Squier, becoming an advocate of one of the least known isthmian routes, that of the Honduras isthmus, thought he had the solution to the transportation problem and the key to a personal fortune.

While on his first visit to the Bay of Fonseca in March, 1850, Squier noticed that a narrow valley cut through the long continental mountain chain near the bay. The valley, Squier found, was that of the Goascorán River, which flows from near Comayagua, Honduras, to the Pacific. Another river, the Ulua, with its source only a few miles distant from the source of the Goascorán, flows in the other direction, toward the Atlantic. The courses of the two rivers thus form a transverse valley all the way across Honduras. This topographical circumstance had attracted the attention of Spanish subjects as early as the sixteenth century and its use had been urged upon the Spanish monarch, but no cross continental road had been built.⁶

⁵Kemble, The Panama Route, 73; Félix Belly, A Travers l'Amérique Centrale: Le Nicaragua et la Canal Interocéanique (2 vols., Paris, 1867), I, 24. For a comparison of the Panama and Honduras routes see Anthony Trollope, The West Indies and the Spanish Main (New York, 1860), 332-36.

⁶E. George Squier, Honduras; Descriptive, Historical, and Statistical (London, 1870), 199-202.

Thinking that the canal through Nicaragua would soon be built, Squier at first attached no particular importance to his observations. Two years later, when it was clear that the canal would not be built, he began to consider seriously the advantages of a transportation route across Honduras. The Honduras route, according to Squier, was shorter by about 1500 steamship miles than the Panama route, which was not yet fully in operation. As a result of his preliminary calculations, in the fall of 1852 Squier decided to promote the Honduras route against all others. He began a characteristically diligent search for financial support, his first object being to make a personal examination of the terrain to determine the feasibility of a railroad and steamship route from the Bay of Fonseca on the Pacific to the port of Omoa, Honduras, on the Atlantic.⁷

To his friend Charles Eliot Norton, Squier explained some of the attractions of the Honduras route:

The distance in a direct line from Omoa to the Bay of Fonseca, is 136 miles. For one half of the way, i.e. from Omoa to within 12 miles of Comayagua [sic], the capital of Honduras there is navigable depth of water in the Ulua river, for vessels of 200 tons. Between that point and the Pacific there is a transversal valley, according to my own observations, and the best information which I can obtain. A railroad seems to be feasible--and I am going to ascertain if it be. The distance from N. Y. to California by this direction is only 200 miles greater than that by Tehuantepec. The latter is beset with difficulties, political and national. It has bad ports on both seas. The first has no such difficulties, and has unexceptionable ports on both sides. . . . It is 800 miles shorter than Nicaragua, and 1500 shorter than Panama.⁸

⁷Squier, Honduras, 203.

⁸Squier to Norton, December 24, 1852, Norton Papers, Houghton Library.

From Norton as well as from others Squier primarily hoped for financial support of the railway project, but from the beginning it was clear that he was interested in more than a railroad across Honduras. Squier believed that Honduras, not to say all of Central America and Mexico, would inevitably fall into the hands of the United States.⁹ Honduras, in Squier's opinion, was a rich but undeveloped country, with vast areas of fertile, uncultivated lands, and with rich, unexploited mines--all awaiting the magic touch of a more vigorous and energetic people. He believed that colonists from the United States and Europe, if they but knew of Honduras' advantages, would flock to the country and cause it to prosper. All it needed was adequate transportation and publicity. "It is not too much to anticipate," he argued "that a country so favored in respect of soil and climate would attract to its shores a large emigration, just as soon as the establishment of lines of steamers and the opening of interior means of communication would enable men to direct their enterprise thither with a prospect of advantage."¹⁰

The faith of those who believed in the Honduras railway project is even better expressed by J. V. S. Anthony, an artist who visited Honduras in 1857:

Start the railroad, gentlemen! Open the richest country on the globe to the enterprise of the world! Let the "iron horse" but once snort through these majestic forests, and its woods will be turned into shining silver, its grasses into glistening gold, its small plantations into thriving Yankee farms; the plow and sickle will supersede the machete

⁹E. George Squier, "San Juan de Nicaragua," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, X (December, 1854), 50.

¹⁰Squier, States of Central America, 725-26.

and the rude digging iron; the weeds, rank and strong, will turn into waving corn and wheat; and the little marshy spots will be soon covered with nutritious rice, all yielding plenty and smiling contentment on the hardy adventurers.¹¹

To take advantage of the wave of emigrants who were expected to make Honduras bloom, Squier wanted land, "as much land as possible," that could be sold to prospective settlers.¹² The land, Squier thought, could be turned into money regardless of what happened to the railway scheme. "If the route from here [Comayagua] to the G. of Hond. proves good, I shall make some conditional arrangement whereby you [Amory Edwards] and I can get hold of property which--road or no road must soon prove of the highest value, but which now can be obtained for a song."¹³ He evidently hoped to acquire land in strategic locations and hold it until the railway and/or emigration enhanced its value. He also wanted control of mines--gold, silver, copper, diamond, coal, and iron--heretofore unexploited "for want of scientific knowledge, intelligence, machinery, and capital."¹⁴ The railway, then, although the nucleus of his promotion scheme, would be only one source of the millions Squier hoped to make in Honduras.

Although Norton did not see fit to join the enterprise, Squier had little difficulty in locating seven men who were willing to invest \$1,000 each to finance a preliminary

¹¹J. V. S. Anthony, "Scraps from an Artist's Notebook: The Carib Settlements," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XV (July, 1857), 153-54.

¹²Draft of the associates' instructions to Squier, n.d., Ephraim George Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

¹³Squier to Amory Edwards, May 1, 1853 (private), ibid.

¹⁴Squier, States of Central America, 145.

exploring expedition to Honduras. Former Secretary of Treasury Robert J. Walker, an ardent expansionist, and Commodore Robert F. Stockton, whose California experience during the Mexican War had awakened him to the need of better communication with the Pacific coast, were among the contributors. New York merchants, among whom Amory Edwards was the most enthusiastic, made up the majority of the rest. Squier, the eighth contributor, agreed to head the expedition, and to conduct the necessary negotiations with the government of Honduras for a charter.¹⁵ The purpose of the expedition, according to Squier, was not to locate a definite route, but simply to determine the road's "greater or less feasibility and its approximate course."¹⁶

The hastily-organized expedition consisted of Squier, three engineers, a draftsman, and a physician who doubled as a mineralogist. It left New York in February, 1853, disguised as a "scientific expedition," to escape detection by rival companies.¹⁷ Landing at San Juan, Nicaragua, the men crossed the isthmus via the Vanderbilt company's Nicaragua route, and began their work at the Bay of Fonseca. The

¹⁵Squier to Norton, January 3, 1853, Norton Papers.

¹⁶E. George Squier, Communication from E. G. Squier, Esq., Agent and Attorney of the Grantees and Proprietors of the Charter of the Honduras Interoceanic Railway Company, to the Provisional Directors of the Said Company in Great Britain (London, November 10, 1856), 2.

¹⁷Squier sailed under the name, George Sorrier, because Vanderbilt's Accessory Transit Company refused to sell him a ticket in his right name. Squier to parents, February 12, 1853, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society; Amory Edwards to Squier, February 9, 1853, Squier Papers, Library of Congress; José de Marcoleta to Francisco Dueñas, February 1, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

engineers, headed by Lieutenant William N. Jeffers of the United States Navy, found no serious impediment to their progress and speedily concluded a cursory exploration of the proposed route. Jeffers, whose later record as an engineer seems to refute Squier's judgment that "he has the poorest eyes for topography of any man I ever knew,"¹⁸ reported from Comayagua in May, and from Omoa in June, 1853, that there could be no serious difficulty in constructing a railroad over the terrain examined. Jeffers envisioned the construction of a railroad all the way across Honduras, although the original plan, as conceived by Squier, was to use steamboats up the Ulua River on the Atlantic side and on the Goascorán River on the Pacific side as far as they were navigable.¹⁹

While the engineers familiarized themselves with Honduran topography Squier dealt with Honduran politics. The political situation was favorable to such a foreign enterprise as the eight associates proposed. Honduras harbored the only Liberal government in Central America in 1853. Isolated and harassed by opposition from the other four republics, particularly from neighboring Guatemala, the stronghold of Rafael Carrera and conservatism, Honduras might well have

¹⁸Squier to Edwards, June 23, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library; see Allan Westcott, "Jeffers, William Nicholson," Dictionary of American Biography, ed. Dumas Malone, X (1933), 14.

¹⁹Jeffers to Squier, May 15, 1853, and June 23, 1853, in E. George Squier, Honduras Inter-oceanic Railway: Preliminary Report (New York, 1854), 46-51, 52-55. The railroad and steamboat plan is sketched in Squier to Norton, December 24, 1852 and January 3, 1853, Norton Papers, and in Squier to parents, June 17, 1853, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

looked to aid from another quarter. José Trinidad Cabañas, President of Honduras, had succeeded Francisco Morazán "as the acknowledged leader of the Liberal or Republican party," and was not only a friend of Squier, but also a well-known advocate of the greater extension of United States influence in Central America.²⁰ In this atmosphere Squier appeared in Comayagua, the capital of Honduras, in April, 1853, prepared to take advantage of the situation for his own profit and perhaps for the profit of his country.

Leaders of the government of Honduras, including Cabañas and Ramón Mejía, minister of state, were not in Comayagua when Squier arrived. They were headquartered at Santa Rosa, engaged in the serious business of fighting a war with Guatemala. Nevertheless Squier's mission was deemed too important to require him to await the return of the government. Cabañas, therefore, delegated to León Alvarado and Justo T. Rodas, prominent Comayagua merchants, authority to negotiate with Squier.²¹

The charter resulting from the month-long Comayagua negotiations, although perhaps not "far more liberal in its provisions than any charter ever conceded for any similar

²⁰The quotation is from William V. Wells, Explorations and Adventures in Honduras (New York, 1857), 495-96. See also Bancroft, Central America, III, 3; Scroggs, Filibusters and Financiers, 84; Carl Scherzer, Travels in the Free States of Central America: Nicaragua, Honduras, and San Salvador (2 vols., London, 1857), II, 14-17.

²¹Ramón Mejía to Squier, May 23, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library. Alvarado's enthusiasm for the railway project is the central theme of the section devoted to Alvarado in Rómulo E. Durón, Honduras literaria: Colección de escritos en prosa y verso procedidos de apuntes biográficos (2 vols., Tegucigalpa, 1896-1899), I, 199-211.

"purpose," as Squier described it, was all that the Americans desired. It conceded to the Honduras Interoceanic Railway Company (yet unorganized) the exclusive right to construct an interoceanic communication system through Honduras, granted free use of natural timber and stone for construction materials, specified that passengers from all nations could use the route free of charges, passport requirements, and baggage examination by the government of Honduras, and allowed eight years for the completion of the work. The charter made an exceptionally generous land concession to the company. It granted 1,000 square miles of territory in the Department of Yoro on the Atlantic coast, and allowed the company the right to purchase an equal or greater area along the line of the road at twelve and a half cents an acre. Squier knew that the Yoro lands were for the most part inaccessible, but the associates wanted a large area at their disposition and Yoro was "the only place where the state could give us so large a body of land in bulk."²² The Yoro territory, Squier thought, needed only emigrants to make it valuable. In return for the concessions it received, the company agreed to pay one dollar to the government of Honduras for each through passenger over ten years of age. The charter was signed by Squier and the representatives of Honduras on June 23, 1853.²³

The next steps, securing Cabañas' approval and

²²Squier to William Brown, August 21, 1856, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

²³Complete texts of the charter and the government's proclamation of ratification are in Antonio A. Ramírez F. Fontecha, La deuda exterior de Honduras: Los empréstitos extranjeros y el ferrocarril interoceanico de la República de Honduras, Centro América (Tegucigalpa, 1913), 71-82.

ratification of the charter by the Honduras legislature, were complicated by the war with Guatemala. To induce Cabañas to act rapidly Squier offered the government of Honduras a loan to pay the expenses of getting the legislature together for an extra session.²⁴ Although then engaged in preparing an expedition against Guatemala Cabañas invited Squier, through Minister of State Mejía, to come to government headquarters at Santa Rosa to talk over his proposals.²⁵

On July 10 Squier arrived in Santa Rosa only to find that Cabañas had gone to the frontier. The minister of war, however, remained in Santa Rosa because of illness, and Squier immediately began a series of significant conversations with him and other officials of the Honduras government. "I was told that my arrival had been anxiously expected," Squier reported, "not only in reference to our project but in reference to other matters which had for a long time occupied their thoughts." Cabañas, Squier was told, had given up all hope of peace or prosperity for Honduras because of the constant hostility of Conservatives from the other Central American states, and therefore wished "to procure the admission of Honduras into the American Union." The government officials asked Squier's advice on how it could be brought about. "I replied," said Squier, "that I thought the matter a very delicate one . . . that although it might not be immediately, it would ultimately be successful; and that they might count

²⁴Squier to Mejía, June 16, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

²⁵Mejía to Squier, June 30, 1853, ibid.

upon my cooperation."²⁶

Before the talks could be continued Squier learned that the Honduran forces suffered a disastrous defeat near Chiquimula, Guatemala, and that Carrera's forces were pursuing Cabañas in Honduras territory. Guatemalan troops advanced unopposed as far as Santa Rosa, which they sacked on July 19, and retreated the following day. Squier, who had left Santa Rosa just in time to escape the pillage, returned to the ruined town a few days later in time to greet Cabañas and the remnants of his defeated army.²⁷

This time Squier had "several confidential interviews with Cabañas & the Minister of State." Cabañas approved the charter readily enough, but he apparently refused to work for speedy ratification unless the company agreed to aid him against Guatemala. Cabañas needed aid badly. The recent events of the Honduras-Guatemala war, which had been characterized by intermittent border skirmishes since 1852, illustrated how tenuous was his hold on Honduras. Another defeat like the one at Chiquimula might cause the Cabañas régime to fall, thus destroying the last Liberal bastion in Central America. The railroad project, with its promise of emigrants and money from the United States, offered Cabañas a means of strengthening his country against Guatemala. On the other hand if Cabañas were replaced by a Conservative dominated by Carrera the railway project would be at an end. Believing that

²⁶Squier to Edwards, July 12, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

²⁷Squier to Edwards, July 11, 1853, July 26, 1853; Carlos Madrid (for Cabañas) to Squier, July 27, 1853, *ibid.*; E. George Squier, Honduras and Guatemala (New York, 1854), 6.

success of his plans depended on Cabañas, Squier took the steps he thought necessary to insure the régime against Guatemala. He promised Cabañas that the company would provide money and arms as soon as possible.²⁸

The suggestion that Honduras annex herself to the United States, which Cabañas reiterated personally, did not find Squier and Edwards unprepared. They had apparently already anticipated such a development; indeed the original plan of the eight associates was that Squier should have himself named Honduran minister to the United States in order to negotiate a treaty, presumably of annexation, between the United States and Honduras. This plan was discussed by Edwards in March, 1853, before Squier and Cabañas met.²⁹ After discussing the matter with Cabañas, however, Squier apparently gave up his ambition to represent Honduras in the United States. Realizing that the Franklin Pierce administration, though considered friendly, might not receive Squier as a representative of a foreign nation, and that a co-operative Honduran could serve the purpose with less suspicion, this part of the plan was abandoned, and Cabañas agreed to appoint a native Honduran as minister to Washington. Squier, on behalf of the company, agreed to pay the expenses of the

²⁸ Mejía to Squier, July 18, 1853; Squier to Edwards, July 26, September 19, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

²⁹ According to Edwards, "When you return you must get yourself recognized or rather appointed as special minister as José de M. arcoleta, Nicaraguan minister to the United States who also acted for Honduras will not carry out our plans--and your being authorized to act will be decidedly advantageous, but you understand all this." Edwards to Squier, March 19, 1853; Squier to Edwards, June 23, 1853, ibid.

[Honduran mission up to \$500.³⁰]

At the same time that Cabañas was promising to send a minister to Washington, the company was trying to get President Pierce to send a minister to Comayagua. Instead, the administration appointed Solon Borland, then senator from Arkansas, as Minister to Central America and gave him instructions to visit all the capitals.³¹ Upon hearing of the Borland appointment, Squier fired off letters to the State Department and to Borland, insisting that the new minister come first to Honduras to show sympathy toward Honduras in its fight against the Guatemalan Conservatives.³² Borland, who was entirely sympathetic with the Young America expansionist philosophy and the Honduras railway project, agreed to come,³³ but he was so long delayed in the United States and stayed so briefly in Central America that his influence was of no assistance to the railroad company. Appointed in April, 1853, he did not leave the United States until August and did not arrive in León until October.³⁴ He resigned the following February without ever reaching Honduras.

³⁰ Edwards to Squier, September 5, 1853; Squier to Edwards, July 26, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

³¹ See "Solon Borland," Biographical Directory of the American Congress (Washington, 1950), 869; William L. Marcy to Borland, April 18, 1853, in Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, IV, 39.

³² Squier to Mejía, June 16, 1853; Squier to Cabañas, September 6, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

³³ Edwards to Squier, June 4, 1853, ibid.; New York Herald, April 24, 1853; Borland to Marcy, October 8, 1853, in Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, IV, 362.

³⁴ Edwards to Squier, August 5, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library; Borland to Marcy, October 8, 1853, in Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, IV, 362.

So long as Borland could be of no help, the company placed its hopes for a treaty on a Honduran minister to the United States. It is not clear, from the available evidence, just what the associates expected from Honduras-United States negotiations. From the correspondence of Squier and his friend Amory Edwards, who, next to Squier, was the most persistent promoter of the Honduras railway project, it seems clear, however, that the annexation of Honduras to the United States was included in their plans. This does not mean that the railway project was merely a blind; the associates did intend to build a railroad, but they believed that annexation to the United States would make the construction of the railroad more certain and would enhance the value of the Honduran lands acquired by the charter. As an editorial in the New York Herald, a supporter of the annexation of Honduras, explained: "This railway must be built, if built at all, by American cash and American enterprise. If Honduras were annexed . . . it might easily be finished in two or three years."³⁵

The Squier mission did not proceed smoothly in the fall of 1853. Because of his defeat at the hands of Carrera near Chiquimula and the growing dissatisfaction within Honduras, Cabañas deemed it advisable not to assemble the legislature until the following year. The sending of a commissioner to the United States was also delayed because the first and second appointees refused to serve and a third was not immediately available. Squier, therefore, resolved to leave

³⁵New York Herald, May 25, 1854.

Honduras for the time being, and to begin negotiations in El Salvador.³⁶

Squier proposed to obtain a Salvadoran charter for the railway company and permission to cross Salvadoran soil. This he wished to do in case the engineers decided that the best route crossed a corner of Salvadoran territory and terminated at El Salvador's excellent port on the Bay of Fonseca, La Unión.

El Salvador, though of liberal traditions, was under the influence of Guatemala in 1853, and little prone to favor the introduction of North American influence.³⁷ Confident that the engineers would select a Pacific terminus on Honduran soil--probably the island of Sacate Grande, which was just a few miles off the coast of Honduras in the Bay of Fonseca--rather than in Salvadoran territory, Squier was prepared to insist that his demands be met without compromise.³⁸ Squier's attitude toward El Salvador was similar to his attitude toward Costa Rica in 1849. Writing to Edwards, Squier vowed that he would let El Salvador "go to the devil and the bats" if she did not co-operate with him.³⁹

In late August, 1853, upon hearing of Squier's arrival and his request for a hearing, the government of El Salvador

³⁶Squier to Edwards, September 19, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

³⁷See Bancroft, Central America, III, 299.

³⁸Squier to Edwards, April 10, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

³⁹Ibid.

appointed Pedro Rómulo Negrete to negotiate with him.⁴⁰

Negrete proved intractable. He met with Squier on several occasions but adamantly refused to accept the charter Squier proposed. Finally, he introduced two articles which he insisted on including before he would sign. One article stipulated that all railway personnel should be subject to Salvadoran law, and the other provided that a certain sum should be paid to the Salvadoran government in compensation for the granting of the charter; Squier insisted that the first article was unnecessary and that the sum suggested in the second article was too high.⁴¹

The real reason for the failure of the negotiations, however, was the Salvadoran fear that the railway would expose the country to too much foreign influence. Squier himself admitted that "there is great fear that some design of annexation is concealed under this contract, & it is necessary to have something in it to prove the contrary to the people!"⁴² A few days after negotiations had been broken off, Squier's correspondent in San Salvador, who had been asked for information about public reaction to the railway enterprise, reported: "With the exception of a few small potatoes variations, it remains all the same; they are spitting fire and flames about the idea of this glorious Republic being at some time or

⁴⁰José A. Jiménez to Squier, August 23, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

⁴¹Squier to Pedro R. Negrete, n.d. [August, 1853], *ibid.* See also New York Herald, December 19, 1853.

⁴²Squier to Edwards, September 19, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library. See also New York Herald, October 28, 1853.

other 'connected,' with the country, over which are spread out the tyrannical wings of that abominable 'Buzzard,' generally called the american eagle."⁴³ Apparently El Salvador regarded concessions to the railway promoters as steps toward annexation. The Gaceta de Guatemala praised the circumspection "with which the Salvadoran government has acted in this matter, not omitting to care for everything which could affect her independence."⁴⁴

Finding that nothing could be done in El Salvador and that the engineers were satisfied with Sacate Grande as a terminal point for the railway, Squier recommended that the railway be confined to the territory of Honduras.⁴⁵

After Squier terminated the negotiations with El Salvador the expedition disbanded. Jeffers, who had already been assigned by the Navy Department to the Water Witch expedition to the Paraná River, left Honduras in August, 1853. Squier traveled from San Salvador to La Unión and the Bay of Fonseca in September, then struck out across Honduras and returned to New York by way of Omoa and British Honduras. He was back in New York in December. The expedition had taken nearly a year from its organization to its return.

⁴³John Archer to Squier, September 9, 1853; in two other letters Archer reiterated his opinion that the government was hostile or indifferent to the project, September 16, 1853, and September 30, 1853, Squier Papers, Library of Congress. According to another correspondent from La Unión, "You have been pretty well set down by the caballeros here as one of these 'Yankee especuladores' but I dont suppose you expected anything else." John Fearon to Squier, February 4, 1854, ibid.

⁴⁴Gaceta de Guatemala, September 23, 1853.

⁴⁵Squier to Edwards, September 19, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

Following the return of the expedition to New York, a report on its findings was published. The report, which was written by Squier, stated that a railroad approximately 160 miles in length could easily be built from Puerto Caballos (slightly northeast of Omoa) to the island of Sacate Grande in the Bay of Fonseca. It emphasized that the reputedly rugged mountains of Honduras would not hamper the proposed railway because, "The valleys of the Humuya and Goascoran, constitute a great transverse valley extending from sea to sea, completely cutting through the chain of the Cordilleras . . .". The surrounding country afforded "a variety of climate adapted to every caprice, and a temperature suitable for the cultivation of every product of every zone," and "the hills and mountains of the interior contain numberless mines of the precious metals." Construction materials could be found among the "inexhaustible quantities of the finest white and blue marble and sandstone, as also of the best pine, oak, and other varieties of useful timber." Laborers sufficient to the needs of the railway could be found, according to Squier, in the mahogany cutters, of which, "there is, probably, no equal number of men under the tropics, so inured to hard labor and exposure, or so well instructed in precisely the kind of work which we require . . .". As for the practical matter of distances, the Honduras route was claimed to be 1,000 miles shorter from New York to San Francisco (in steamer distance from port to port) than the Panama route, and exactly the same distance as the Tehuantepec route.⁴⁶

⁴⁶Squier, Honduras Interoceanic Railway: Preliminary Report, 7 ff.

The advantages of the Honduras route, though understandably exaggerated by the promoters, were indeed important. Honduras did have at least one of the best port locations in Central America, the climate was more healthful than that of say, Panama, and of greatest importance, the distance between New York and San Francisco via Honduras was much shorter than via Panama or Nicaragua. But the disadvantages, which were not pointed out by the report, were equally important. There were two great obstacles to the completion of the project: one was the tremendous cost involved in building a 160-mile railway through rugged country, and the other was the fact that there were two other isthmian routes already in operation. The Honduras project would not only have to prove its own merits, it would also have to withstand the opposition of the vigorous and powerful Nicaraguan and Panamanian interests.

Believing that their enterprise would "supersede any and all others," no matter the opposition, the Honduras supporters organized a preliminary Honduras Interoceanic Railway Company with headquarters in New York.⁴⁷ Only one thousand shares of stock were printed, and the distribution was confined to the original promoters of the railway and their friends. They intended to seek public subscription as a formal stock company, but the unfavorable financial outlook in 1854 and difficulties in Honduras prevented them from carrying out their plans.⁴⁸ Amory Edwards was named president

⁴⁷Squier to parents, December 31, 1853, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

⁴⁸Squier, Communication from E. G. Squier to the Provisional Directors, 3.

of the preliminary company, Squier was named secretary, and Augustus Follin, United States Consul in Omoa, was selected as the company's agent in Honduras.⁴⁹

Before proceeding with the organization of the company, it was thought necessary to secure ratification of the charter and to get the proposed Honduras-United States negotiations under way. Amory Edwards undertook these tasks, while Squier remained in New York to arrange the shipment of the promised arms to Honduras.

Edwards left for Honduras shortly after the return of the 1853 expedition. He soon found that convoking the Honduras legislature was a rather difficult task. He reported in January, 1854, that "the association may feel sanguine of the Ratification, but they [must?] make up their minds to some expence and the President [of Honduras] makes up his mind to hard work, and a good deal of intrigue." He estimated that it would cost between \$2,500 and \$5,000 to "send for the members of the legislature."⁵⁰ In March he reported that only two members were missing, and that an escort had been sent out to bring them to Comayagua.⁵¹ At last, in April, the legislature met, and though some opposition to the railway enterprise was reported, on April 28 the charter was ratified.⁵²

⁴⁹Squier, Honduras Interoceanic Railway: Preliminary Report, 3.

⁵⁰Edwards to Squier, January 21, 1854, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

⁵¹Edwards to Squier, March 1, 1854, ibid.

⁵²Gaceta de Guatemala, March 24, 1854, May 19, 1854.

Edwards did not disclose the ultimate expense of getting the legislature together, but it cost the company two \$20,000 loans (which the company did not expect to recover) to insure the co-operation of Cabañas. The first loan, apparently arranged in Santa Rosa by Squier and Cabañas, bought six cannons, 270 cartons of rifles, and an unspecified amount of ammunition.⁵³ The arrival of the arms shipment in early April brightened the outlook considerably for Cabañas. Writing to Squier, he said: "The arms and other utensils of war that you were kind enough to send me have been placed at the disposition of the Commandant of Omoa. . . . This remission is a new testimony that you have not forgotten the interests of Honduras and its government."⁵⁴ The second loan of \$20,000 was signed in Comayagua by Edwards and Cabañas on the day the charter was ratified.⁵⁵

Meanwhile news of the arms shipment reached Central America and aroused much hostility, especially in Guatemala. Felipe Molina, Guatemalan minister in Washington, protested to the United States government,⁵⁶ and the Gaceta de Guatemala, the official government newspaper, charged the railway company with illegal interference in Central American affairs. Squier's true object, according to the Gaceta, was "to foment disorders

⁵³Gaceta de Guatemala, April 28, 1854; Wells, Explorations in Honduras, 205.

⁵⁴Cabañas to Squier, April 28, 1854, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

⁵⁵Squier to Directors, Honduras Interoceanic Railway Company, Limited, May 19, 1857, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

⁵⁶Felipe Molina to William L. Marcy, February 14, 1854, in Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, IV, 383-84.

and stir up political questions in order that later the intrigues of the annexationists, of whom Squier is an agent and active collaborator, will find the ground prepared."⁵⁷ The official gazette echoed this theme again and again in its columns, claiming that the railway was not a legitimate enterprise, but was in reality a ruse designed to prepare first Honduras, then the other republics, for annexation.⁵⁸

The shipment of arms, designed to strengthen Cabañas against pressure from Guatemala, undoubtedly put him out of danger from Carrera for the time being. But it unquestionably increased the bitterness between Honduras and Guatemala and probably strengthened Carrera's determination to oust Cabañas. Guatemala was opposed to the railway project from the beginning, and it was claimed by the railway promoters that one of the reasons Guatemala prosecuted the war against Honduras with such vigor was because of a desire to defeat the railway project. It was reported by Follin from Omoa "that the determination of the parties in power in Guatemala, and of the English in this Bay generally, is open and avowed, to break up the proposed American enterprise of opening an interoceanic communication through this State. And from what I can ascertain this is one of the principal objects of the existing war on Honduras."⁵⁹ Henry Savage, United States

⁵⁷Gaceta de Guatemala, July 22, 1853.

⁵⁸See especially Gaceta de Guatemala, September 7, November 3, 1854.

⁵⁹Augustus Follin to Marcy, November 14, 1853, Consular Despatches, Omoa, II, National Archives.

Consul in Guatemala City, agreed.⁶⁰ Follin and Savage believed, as did Squier, that Guatemalan opposition to the railway enterprise stemmed from the fear that Guatemala's trade with Belize would be abandoned in favor of the Honduras route. The opposition became more intense, if necessarily more cautious, when the Guatemalans learned that the company was supplying Cabañas with arms.⁶¹

Squier, in answer to charges of unwarranted interference in the Honduras-Guatemala war, explained: "The transaction was a straightforward, commercial one, precisely like others which take place daily. The Honduras Railroad Company had sufficient faith in the honesty of Honduras to guarantee the payment of its purchases, and is prepared to do so, to any reasonable amount which that State may require."⁶² However commercial the arms deal may have appeared, it was in essence political: Cabañas was "taking the best means of securing himself the future presidency," as a friend of the railway project put it,⁶³ by reconstructing his army, and the railway company was trying to insure its position by cementing in power a favorable government.

The railway associates even considered going further in supporting the Liberal régime in Honduras. Realizing that Cabañas might need men as well as arms, Squier and Edwards

⁶⁰Henry Savage to Marcy, November 10, 1854, in Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, IV, 424.

⁶¹See especially Gaceta de Guatemala, September 22, 1854..

⁶²Squier, Honduras and Guatemala, 11.

⁶³Scherzer, Travels in Central America, II, 16-17. Scherzer had a long interview with Cabañas in 1854, and they talked principally about the railway project.

discussed the possibility of sending "settlers 'with back sights'" to Honduras and made preliminary arrangements to send a crew of filibusters in support of Cabañas.⁶⁴ Captain Randolph B. Marcy, who did not "have the slightest doubt" of the ability of the United States to digest any "piquant morsel" of territory that might fall her way, agreed to head an armed expedition to Honduras.⁶⁵ Fortunately for Squier's reputation, the plans (which were never fully described in the available correspondence) were called off before they could be carried out. As Squier explained it to Cabañas:

Capt. Marcy who proposed going to Honduras with some men, has not yet returned from the frontier. He will be here probably next month, when we shall consult upon the matter of his going out, etc. Until then I do not think any steps will be taken in reference to it. At present, for reasons which I have given above unfavorable financial outlook, it will be quite impossible for us to carry out the plans discussed between you and Mr. Edwards.⁶⁶

Marcy renewed his offer to head a military expedition to Honduras as late as December, 1856, and other filibustering suggestions received attention in 1856, but the company did not send any further military aid, either of men or materials, to the government of Honduras.⁶⁷

⁶⁴Squier to Edwards, October 2, 1853; Squier to Cabañas, September 2, 1854, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

⁶⁵Randolph B. Marcy, Border Reminiscences (New York, 1872), 368; Marcy to Squier, September 24, 1854, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶⁶Squier to Cabañas, September 2, 1854, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

⁶⁷Marcy to Squier, December 12, 1856; Jane M. Cazneau to Squier, September 24, 1861, Squier Papers, Library of Congress; Edwards to Squier, July 26, 1856, September 10, 1856, Squier Papers, Huntington Library. The company,

The second object of Edwards' visit to Honduras--getting the Honduras-United States negotiations started--was also successful. In January, 1854, Cabañas appointed José Francisco Barrundia, the most prestigious Liberal in Central America, as Honduran minister to the United States. The railway company was highly pleased with the selection. Barrundia was devoted to the United States, a "firm and consistent republican," an enemy of Carrera, an Anglophobe, and a devoted admirer of Squier.⁶⁸ Edwards' work with the legislature was finished by the time Barrundia was ready to leave, so the two left together by steamer for Mobile.⁶⁹

The purpose of Barrundia's mission to the United States was apparently to negotiate for the admission of North American settlers to Honduras to settle the lands granted to the Honduras Railway Company, and perhaps to negotiate a treaty guaranteeing the protection of the railway.⁷⁰ But it was widely interpreted from the beginning that it was Barrundia's intention to prepare the way for annexation to the United States, or even to treat for annexation immediately. This

however, did send Honduras aid in the form of a cargo of corn in the summer of 1854 to relieve the suffering caused by a famine. New York Herald, August 21, 1854.

⁶⁸The quotation is from the New Orleans Crescent, July 18, 1850; see also David Vela, Barrundia ante espejo de su tiempo (2 vols., Guatemala, 1956-1957), I, 295-300; Montúfar, Reseña histórica de Centro América, VI, 207; José F. Barrundia to Squier, March 30, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

⁶⁹National Intelligencer, May 23, 1854.

⁷⁰Squier, States of Central America, 275-76; Wells, Explorations in Honduras, 184; Vela, Barrundia, II, 389-90; Cabañas to Squier, April 28, 1854, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

was the only way, according to the reports, that Honduras liberalism would be safe from the rapacious conservatism of Guatemala.⁷¹ According to the Gaceta de Guatemala, "The Hondurans are frightened because of their war with Guatemala and because of the questions in dispute with Great Britain about the Bay Islands and other matters. In consequence, they wish to hand themselves over to the United States. . . . Mr. Squier . . . has influenced them to make the solicitation."⁷² And the New York Herald, which claimed to have a copy of Barrundia's secret instructions, alleged: "The great object of Gen. Barrundia, which comprehends all others, is the downright, absolute, positive annexation of Honduras to the United States."⁷³

There may have been some truth to the reports. In urging Cabañas to appoint a minister to the United States Squier had argued that "the proper agent in Washington and New York can do much more than it is in the power of Mr. Borland to accomplish, especially in those matters not connected with diplomacy."⁷⁴ Edwards, perhaps with annexation in mind, regarded the Barrundia mission with great importance: "If Carrera marches in and beats Gen. Cabañas, I think a temporary Gov^t can be arranged . . . during the armistice [sic] Gen^l Barrundia can complete his arrangements which will supercede [sic] the

⁷¹Gaceta de Guatemala, February 3, 1854; New York Herald, May 21, 1854.

⁷²Gaceta de Guatemala, February 3, 1854.

⁷³New York Herald, May 21, 1854.

⁷⁴Squier to Cabañas, September 6, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

[necessity of elections--therefore push Barrundia negotiations."75]

On the other hand Barrundia is reported to have written from New York: "Here all the newspapers say that I have come to work for the annexation of Honduras. I have undeceived them of this error."76 Perhaps Squier and Edwards intended to manipulate Barrundia into negotiating United States annexation. That they planned to mold the Honduran mission to their own interests is revealed by the following excerpt from a letter from Squier to Edwards:

A hint about our minister when I bring him on. He must be kept as much away from t'other Molina /Cabañas' first choice for the mission was Pedro Molina. Felipe Molina was Guatemalan minister to the United States from 1852 to 1855/ as possible, & be well fed. A snug private dinner every day while in N. Y. preparing for his duties in Washington will be necessary for his health & good for our interests. . . . She /Honduras/ will want some arms, some settlers "with back sights." . . . Think of these things, so that they shall not surprise you nor our friends.77

The high hopes for success of the Barrundia mission were broken by an unexpected disaster. Barrundia presented his credentials to President Pierce and made one significant speech in Washington, in which he advocated more intimate relations with the United States, but on August 4, 1854, he died, before negotiations had begun.78 His death, which

75 Edwards to Squier, January 21, 1854, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

76 Quoted in Vela, Barrundia, I, 298. Vela blames Squier for the Herald interpretation of the Barrundia mission. Ibid., II, 389.

77 Squier to Edwards, October 2, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

78 New York Herald, June 3, 1854; Gaceta de Guatemala, August 25, 1854; National Intelligencer, August 8, 1854.]

Squier regarded as a "national calamity," was undoubtedly a severe blow to the railway project.⁷⁹ The promoters, already burdened with public indifference to their cause, had looked to Barrundia for an electrifying diplomatic success. Now they faced nothing but delays.

The outlook for the railway project in late 1854 was indeed gloomy. Efforts to get Cabañas to appoint a successor were unsuccessful, as were renewed efforts to get Pierce to appoint a minister to Honduras. Cabañas began to squander his precious arms aiding his political comrades in Nicaragua, thus exposing his own régime to danger.⁸⁰ Squier and Edwards both fell ill from fever apparently contracted in the "eminently salubrious" climate of Honduras.⁸¹ The Amory Edwards mercantile establishment failed.⁸² And above all, speculators in the United States showed no eagerness to invest in the new isthmian transportation route. "Times are exceedingly bad here, money being scarce, and confidence destroyed," Squier reported. "Of course, no enterprise like ours can prosper under such circumstances. We confine ourselves simply to carry out what we have commenced, and shall delay active operations until there is what is called a 'let up.'"⁸³ By the

⁷⁹Squier, States of Central America, 275.

⁸⁰José D. Gámez, Historia de Nicaragua (Managua, 1889), 631; José María Zelaya to Squier, July 30, 1854, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

⁸¹Squier to parents, May 31, 1854, July 28, 1854, September 6, 1854, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

⁸²Squier to Cabañas, September 6, 1854, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

⁸³Squier to Joel Squier, September 6, 1854, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

end of the year the dispirited associates concluded that the enterprise could not be exclusively American, as they had hoped, and that capital from abroad was the company's only salvation.

In order to keep the Honduras railway project alive, Squier, appointed "special agent and attorney of the proprietors," went to Europe in June, 1855, to try to get the co-operation of French and British capitalists. His job was to get foreign capital behind the original company, or failing that, to sell out for as much as possible.⁸⁴ The mission turned out to be one of the most difficult of his career. It kept him in Europe from June, 1855, to March, 1857, most of the time in London. In France, where he talked to officials of the Crédit Mobilier and to the Rothschilds, he had little luck, although his representations did apparently induce the Crédit Mobilier to send agents to Honduras to investigate mining interests.⁸⁵ But in England he found a number of capitalists interested in the Honduras project. Chief among them was William Brown, a well-known Liverpool banker who had family connections with banking houses in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York and whose brother was Lord Clarendon, British foreign minister.⁸⁶

⁸⁴J. D. Maxwell to Squier, July 8, August 19, 1855; James S. Thayer to Squier, August 24, 1855; Henry Stanton to Squier, December 31, 1855, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

⁸⁵Edwards to Squier, March 15, September 10, 1856, *ibid.*; Gustave de Belot and Charles Lindemann, Amérique Centrale: La République du Honduras et son Chemin Inter-océanique (Paris, 1867), 52-53.

⁸⁶John C. Brown, A Hundred Years of Merchant Banking (New York, 1909), 58-146.

Believing that "getting funds to make the Road" would be impossible as long as the Central American question remained unsolved, the British capitalists declined to back Squier's project until friendly relations between Great Britain and Honduras were restored.⁸⁷ The difficulty between the two nations centered on the British protectorate of the Mosquito Coast and the British occupation of the Bay Islands, a group of islands in the Bay of Honduras, a few miles off the east coast of Honduras. The protectorate, though somewhat disarmed by the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, still rankled patriotic Hondurans. The controversy over the Bay Islands, which had been occupied from time to time by British subjects since the British became interested in the Mosquito Coast, erupted in 1852 when they were proclaimed a British colony by the British government.⁸⁸ The United States joined Honduras in protesting this move, claiming that it constituted a violation of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty.⁸⁹ The British government, thinking it expedient to accept the American interpretation of the treaty rather than see it destroyed, was by 1855 looking for a face-saving way out of the Mosquito

⁸⁷William Brown to Squier, May 30, 1856, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

⁸⁸Van Alstyne, "British Diplomacy and the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, 1850-60," Journal of Modern History, XI (June, 1939), 160; Squier, States of Central America, 625-26.

⁸⁹Squier's "ferocious article" on the Bay Islands in the Democratic Review first drew attention to the British proclamation and set off a congressional debate on Anglo-American relations in early 1853. E. George Squier, "The Islands of the Gulf of Honduras: Their Seizure and Organization as a British Colony," Democratic Review, XXXI (November-December, 1852), 544-52; see Perkins, The Monroe Doctrine, 1826-1867, 215 n.-216 n.

and Bay Islands predicament. The British were willing to abandon the protectorate and turn the islands over to Honduras, but they refused to relinquish control until they had assured the residents, some of them British citizens, of adequate protection against possible Honduran vengeance.⁹⁰ In order to advance the railway project Squier found it necessary to take part in settling these diplomatic problems.

Squier worked in London all through 1856 trying to arrange a settlement satisfactory to Honduras, Great Britain, and the United States. The Dallas-Clarendon convention, signed in London October 17, 1856, which American minister George M. Dallas admitted was founded on Squier's plan, was the fruit of Squier's work behind the scenes.⁹¹ It provided for British abandonment of the Mosquito protectorate and withdrawal from the Bay Islands, but it restricted Honduran control of the islands' residents. The United States Senate rejected this plan because of the limitation on Honduran sovereignty.

Meanwhile Squier worked to effect British withdrawal by direct negotiations between Honduras and Great Britain. He claimed to be in complete charge of the Honduran case in London: "I have procured the appointment of two ministers from C. A. . . . whom I have to take care of, and whose

⁹⁰Richard W. Van Alstyne, "Anglo-American Relations, 1853-1857: British Statesmen on the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty and American Expansion," American Historical Review, XLII (April, 1937), 491-500.

⁹¹George M. Dallas to Marcy, April 7, 1856, in Julia Dallas (ed.), A Series of Letters from London Written during the Years 1856, '57, '58, '59, and '60 (Philadelphia, 1869), 16.

dispatches I am obliged to write, who are now here, under my charge."⁹² León Alvarado and Víctor Herrán, the two Honduran negotiators, who publicly acknowledged their indebtedness to Squier, signed a treaty with Lord Clarendon August 26, 1856.⁹³ It was similar to the Dallas-Clarendon convention, declaring the islands under Honduran sovereignty, but exempting the residents from Honduran taxation, military service, and guaranteeing their right of self-government. It also provided for relinquishment of the Mosquito protectorate. A so-called additional article bore specifically on the railway project. It provided that the Honduras railway would "be at all times open and free to the government and subjects of Great Britain," and that "in order to secure the construction and permanence of the route or road herein contemplated . . . Great Britain recognizes the rights of sovereignty and property of Honduras in and over the line of said road, and for the same reason guarantees positively and efficaciously the entire neutrality of the same."⁹⁴

The outcome of the Honduras-Great Britain convention was in doubt for about two years, and the resulting uncertainty caused the railway promoters much dismay. Despite the efforts of Squier and Alvarado, opposition to the solution provided by the convention developed in Honduras. The

⁹²Squier to parents, July 31, 1856, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

⁹³New York Herald, October 9, 1856, quoting Liverpool Albion, September 22, 1856.

⁹⁴Algunos documentos importantes sobre los límites entre Honduras y Nicaragua (New York, 1938), pages not numbered.

Honduras legislature, meeting in early 1857, failed to bring the issue to a vote, thus allowing the time permitted for ratification to elapse. Squier blamed the hostile influence of Costa Rica and Guatemala for the inaction, but it seems clear that the Hondurans themselves were displeased with the convention, primarily because of the objectionable limitations on their sovereignty.⁹⁵ The British were not able to terminate their embarrassing occupation of the Mosquito Coast and the Bay Islands until April 22, 1861, when the Wyke-Cruz Treaty, negotiated in Comayagua in late 1859, was finally ratified.⁹⁶

Despite the uncertainty over the diplomatic situation, Squier was able to interest a group of British businessmen in the Honduras railway project. Instead of supporting the American company the British group, after protracted haggling over the purchase price, bought the charter and privileges obtained by Squier and his associates and organized a new company.⁹⁷ The details of the financial arrangement, described below by William Brown, were more satisfactory to the incoming group of British businessmen than to the original American backers.

We consider that the arrangement with the Grantees is a very favorable one--first to pay them their expenses out of pocket for obtaining the Charter, £25,000--next to give them £25,000 in free shares, & £25,000 out of the first sales of the land, & equivalent to £25,000 in shares after the first instalment is paid by them on the

⁹⁵Squier to Robert R. R. Moore, July 22, 1857, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society; New York Herald, December 17, 1856; New Orleans Price-Current, November 21, 1857.

⁹⁶Algunos documentos importantes.

⁹⁷Squier to parents, January 26, 1857, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

shares they agree to take, say in all £125,000 nearly all contingent on the success of the Road. For this we get 1,500,000 Acres of Land which will be valuable as soon as the Road is opened.⁹⁸

In January, 1857, the British businessmen organized the Honduras Interoceanic Railway Company, Limited, with its seat in London and an associate directorate in New York. William Brown, who said he only became involved in the company at the solicitation of his brother, Lord Clarendon, was named chairman, and R. W. Crawford, later Governor of the Bank of England, vice-chairman.⁹⁹ Squier returned to the United States as a member of the directorate and head of the New York agency, which was to be the headquarters of the field operations. As in 1854, the company postponed public stock subscription until the financial situation improved.¹⁰⁰

While Squier was in Europe acquainting "graybeards and capitalists" with "the simplest lessons in geography,"¹⁰¹ two events of great importance to the railway project had occurred in Central America: Cabañas had fallen from power in Honduras, and William Walker had become president of Nicaragua. The fall of Cabañas put the company's previously favorable position in Honduras to a severe test. "The revolutionary

⁹⁸William Brown to J. P. Heywood, January 17, 1857, Squier Papers, Huntington Library; see also Edwards to Squier, January 7, 1857, *ibid.*

⁹⁹Ramón de Silva Ferro, Historical Account of the Mischances in Regard to the Construction of a Railway across the Republic of Honduras (London, 1875), 2; Brown to Squier, August 16, 1856; Brown to E. B. Neill, June 3, 1857, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

¹⁰⁰Squier to parents, January 26, 1857, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

¹⁰¹Squier, Honduras, 210.

leaders now at the head of affairs," commented Squier, ". . . are, no doubt, disposed to look with suspicion if not with hostility, on all the acts and measures of their predecessors in office without reference to their merits or value."¹⁰² The new president as of February 17, 1856, was Santos Guardiola, who had conducted his revolutionary campaign against Cabañas from Guatemala and who had openly received aid from Carrera.¹⁰³ Squier's antipathy to Guardiola was a matter of public record¹⁰⁴ and could not have been concealed from the new president, but personal feelings were not allowed to interfere with the railway project, now referred to in Squier's letters as the "cause," and the company promised to deal harmoniously with the new government.¹⁰⁵

The advent of Walker in Nicaragua was an equally severe test for the company, for Walker's activities made all Americans suspect in the eyes of many Central Americans. Those who opposed the construction of an interoceanic railway in Honduras could point to the Accessory Transit Company (which had brought Walker hundreds of recruits) and ask whether Honduras wished to be the medium for the introduction of more American adventurers to Central America. Guardiola, who was

¹⁰²Squier to Moore, June 19, 1857, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

¹⁰³Gaceta de Guatemala, October 21, 1853, October 19, 1855.

¹⁰⁴Squier, Nicaragua, II, 173-79; Squier, Honduras and Guatemala, 11.

¹⁰⁵Guardiola to Squier, January 3, 1858, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

"dreadfully afraid of Walker."¹⁰⁶ and who could have had no love for Squier, could scarcely have been securely confident that the Honduras Railway Company would not bring Honduras disaster rather than the prosperity it promised.

The directors of the company feared opposition from Honduras for another reason. The company hoped to secure the direct sanction of the projected railway by the British government, which was then considering the railway as part of a mail and military route to the Far East.¹⁰⁷ It was hoped that Great Britain would authorize the sounding of the harbor at Puerto Caballos and the Bay of Fonseca, and also an examination of the route to confirm the company's survey. But the company first had to prove to the British Foreign Office that Honduras favored the enterprise, for British officials doubted that the company had the approval of either Guardiola or the people of Honduras.¹⁰⁸

For these reasons--the uncertainty of Guardiola's attitude, the unknown effect of Walker's presence in Central America, and the desire to get British government sanction of the railway--the new directors made great haste to re-establish the company's position in Honduras by preparing to dispatch a corps of engineers to survey the route in detail.

¹⁰⁶The quotation is from a letter from Lieutenant William Jeffers to Squier, n.d., quoted in Squier to Moore, February 1, 1858, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society. See also New Orleans Crescent, November 16, 1857.

¹⁰⁷Robert Fitzroy, Report of Capt. Robert Fitzroy, R. N. to the Earl of Clarendon on the Proposed Honduras Interoceanic Railway (London, 1856), 5; Moore to Squier, September 4, 1857, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

¹⁰⁸Moore to Squier, May 26, 1857, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

Squier was instructed to organize and superintend the expedition from the New York agency. By April 15, 1857, or within sixteen days of his arrival at New York, Squier managed to get together an expedition of some forty men, headed by Chief Engineer John C. Trautwine, who had superintended much of the survey for the Panama railroad, and send them off to Honduras. Squier explained:

This haste was, in my opinion, rendered necessary in order to comply literally, as well as in spirit, with the provisions of our charter, and thereby prevent any cause of complaint or ground of interference with our privileges, on the part of the Government of Honduras, then under somewhat hostile influences, and much excited by the proceedings of Gen. Walker in Nicaragua.¹⁰⁹

The Trautwine surveying expedition was in the field from May, 1857, to March, 1858. During that time it was plagued by an incredible array of mishaps, personal disagreements, faulty decisions, and conflicting reports. Scarcely had it arrived at Omoa when two of the three principal assistant engineers resigned, accusing Trautwine, correctly, of drunkenness. The man in charge of providing the corps with transportation and supplies fell to quarreling with Trautwine and had to be removed. A Vanderbilt agent who had taken employment with the corps peppered the chairman of the company, who appeared to be inherently pessimistic, with unfavorable reports. The rainy season came early and delayed operations on the Atlantic coast. Cholera and low funds were among the other disturbing factors. But the survey was ultimately completed (at a cost of nearly £30,000) and the line of the road located,

¹⁰⁹Squier to directors of the Company, April 13, 1858, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

leaving the problems of relations with Honduras and Great Britain, of raising the money, and of construction yet to be solved.¹¹⁰

In Great Britain, meanwhile, officials of the company were successful in getting the co-operation of the British government. Lieutenant Colonel Edward Stanton of the Royal Engineers was selected in mid-1857 to go to Honduras to verify the company's survey, which was then in progress. The company paid his wages and expenses, but his instructions came from Sir John Burgoyne, Inspector General of Fortifications.¹¹¹ The general purpose of his trip is outlined by Robert R. Moore, secretary of the company:

Col. Staunton speaks of taking a very thoro. review of the survey & running the line & proving the soundings in every particular. He will report not merely upon the line in its commercial aspect, but in a military point of view with regard to the conveyance of troops & munitions of war to India China &c and he will thoroly investigate the fitness of the Bay of Fonseca and of the point selected by Lt Jeffers as the terminus in view of the Bay becoming instead of Valparaiso the naval station of the Pacific fleet.¹¹²

Stanton, Amory Edwards, and eight assistants left New York in December, and on January 23, 1858, they arrived at La Unión, where they were joined by William Jeffers, who assisted Stanton in his work. Stanton's report was inconclusive. He was impressed with the excellence of the two terminal ports and with the accuracy of the survey, but he thought that the

¹¹⁰Details of the difficulties experienced by the expedition are reported in Squier's letters to Moore during 1857, and a summary of them is in Squier to directors of the Company, April 13, 1858, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

¹¹¹Moore to Squier, September 4, 1857, ibid.

¹¹²ibid.

railway, though practicable, would be very costly.¹¹³ The British government, although it had guaranteed the route in a convention with Honduras, and had sponsored the Stanton expedition, made no further move to support the project.¹¹⁴

Because of the uncertainty of the company's position in Honduras and the rest of Central America the directors awaited with great interest news of the reception of the Trautwine expedition in Honduras. To their great relief, George R. Gliddon, deputy agent of the company in Honduras, reported that the expedition was received at Omoa with "every possible kindness" and "that the Governmt is thoroughly friendly, all rumors to the contrary notwithstanding."¹¹⁵ Further reports indicated that the company had nothing to fear from Guardiola. In November, 1857, Squier was able to report: "Mr. Gliddon's relations with the Governmt seem to be of the most cordial character, and President Guardiola has written me a private letter, thanking me for my services to Honduras, and asking that all past prejudices be forgotten. From being the declared enemy of the road he has come round to be its warmest friend."¹¹⁶ More evidence of Guardiola's good will came in

¹¹³Amory Edwards to Squier, February 15, 1858, quoted in Squier to Moore, March 16, 1858; Moore to Squier, April 20, 1858, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society; Belot and Lindemann, Amérique Centrale, 36; New York Herald, March 1, 1858.

¹¹⁴See Robert Fitzroy to Squier, December 17, 1858, Squier Papers, Library of Congress; Moore to Squier, March 25, 1859; H. Hill to William Brown, April 1, 1859, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

¹¹⁵George R. Gliddon to Squier, May 23, 1857, quoted in Squier to Moore, June 29, 1857, ibid.

¹¹⁶Squier to Moore, November 7, 1857, Squier Papers, ibid. The letter Squier refers to is not in the Library of

a letter from Jeffers, who visited the President in early 1858:

The President was very frank. He said he had an opposition to contend against, and had therefore said nothing in the official Gazette for or against the road; that he saw a change must soon come over Honduras; that he had come over to the doctrine of "Manifest Destiny," and meant to yield gracefully as possible to what was inevitable.¹¹⁷

That Guardiola had accepted the doctrine of Manifest Destiny is doubtful, but at least by March, 1858, at the opening of the Honduras legislature, he saw fit to devote the first part of the section of his address on domestic policy to praise of the company.¹¹⁸ Additional reports seemed to indicate that the people in general shared the enthusiasm of the government for the project: "the people here are all alive to the work; some seeking contracts, others proposing to supply wood, others lands, etc."¹¹⁹

The favorable attitude of Honduras toward the railway after the formation of the new company was complemented by

Congress collection. However, a letter from Guardiola to Squier dated January 3, 1858, endorses the company. Squier Papers, Library of Congress. Reports to the company in London substantiated Squier's assertion of Guardiola's friendliness. Moore to Squier, July 24, 1857, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

¹¹⁷ Jeffers to Squier, n.d., quoted in Squier to Moore, February 1, 1858, *ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Gaceta de Guatemala*, April 22, 1858. Guardiola, however, soon grew impatient with the failure of the company to begin construction. Guardiola to Neill, November 20, 1858, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

¹¹⁹ León Alvarado to Squier, July 20, 1857, quoted in Squier to directors of the company, September 1, 1857, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society. See also Squier to Moore, July 28, 1857, and Charles Doratt to Squier, April 28, 1857, quoted in Squier to Moore, June 19, 1857, *ibid.*

a relaxation of opposition from both Guatemala and El Salvador. The Gaceta de Guatemala did not reverse its position; it continued to oppose the project because Squier was still connected with it and because it considered the Panama route sufficient,¹²⁰ but its hostile attitude toward the company had softened considerably between 1853 and 1857. Factual accounts of the progress of the engineer corps were printed periodically without adverse criticism.¹²¹ The Gaceta even found room in its columns to praise Dr. Gustavus Holland, surgeon of the Trautwine expedition, for his efforts to combat a widespread cholera epidemic in 1857.¹²² The absence of diatribes against the railway project in the Gaceta indicated that the enterprise was no longer considered as dangerous as it once was. From El Salvador Amory Edwards reported upon his arrival in December, 1857, that "the people of San Salvador will do everything in their power to get the terminus at La Unión. . . . The merchants are in a state of real excitement about it."¹²³

Despite the favorable state of opinion in Central America the railway enterprise failed to make headway in the next few years. The difficulties were financial. In 1858 Squier again went to Great Britain to urge the company to seek public stock subscription, but he found the English backers

¹²⁰Gaceta de Guatemala, November 9, 1856.

¹²¹See for example ibid., June 11, December 20, 1857, March 1, 1858.

¹²²Ibid., November 23, 1857.

¹²³Edwards to Squier, December 25, 1857, quoted in Squier to Moore, February 1, 1858, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

dissatisfied and pessimistic. They complained of Trautwine's incomplete reports and of the unexpectedly high cost of the survey. In addition, they suspected that the current estimate for the construction of the railway, \$6,000,000, was too low.¹²⁴ While they were debating these issues, the rate of interest at the Bank of England, which had been favorable in early 1858, went up, and the company counsels advised delay. Before the financial outlook improved war threatened in Europe, and thinking that speculators could not then be induced to invest in American projects, the board of directors abandoned hope of launching the project in the near future.¹²⁵

By 1859 even Squier had ceased to hope for immediate success. When he first became interested in promoting the Honduras route, in 1852, he had promised to "devote three years to making money . . . and no more,"¹²⁶ hoping to make his fortune and return to his studies. After nearly eight years devoted "to the prosecution of the enterprise, and the adjustment of political and other questions connected with it,"¹²⁷ the scheme had not succeeded and Squier's fortune was still not made. "I am pretty much 'tired to death' with this abominable railway," Squier wrote on the last day of 1858, "& long to have it out of my way."¹²⁸ When he returned to

¹²⁴Squier to parents, May 28, 1858, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

¹²⁵Squier to parents, April 23, May 15, 1859, *ibid*.

¹²⁶Squier to Norton, January 3, 1853, Norton Papers.

¹²⁷Squier, Communication from E. G. Squier, 2.

¹²⁸Squier to parents, December 31, 1858, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

New York in January, 1859, without having persuaded the British backers to bring the project before the public, he had very little hope for immediate success, though his natural optimism kept him looking for better times in the future.¹²⁹

During the next few years Squier had little to do with the railway project. Other activities claimed his attention. From 1859 on he began to devote less time to the promotion of Central America and more time to research on Central American topics of interest to him. In 1861 he became editor of Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper and became very much involved in reporting the Civil War. From 1863 to 1865 he was in Peru as United States claims commissioner. By the late 1860's, though he was still much interested in Honduras, and had even secured an appointment as consul-general for Honduras in New York in 1867, control of the railway project had slipped out of his hands.

Hondurans themselves took the leadership in the promotion of the grandiose project upon which the prosperity of the country was believed to depend. León Alvarado, a supporter of the railway project since he negotiated the charter with Squier in 1853 and whose last written words were in praise of Squier's service to Honduras, took the lead in getting loans from Great Britain with which to build the railway.¹³⁰ The loans failed to bring the long-sought railway to Honduras. Only a trickle of the vast sums contracted for reached

¹²⁹Squier to parents, April 23, 1859, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

¹³⁰Alvarado to Squier, February 17, 1870, in Durón, Honduras literaria, I, 200.

Honduras; the rest went for discounts, commissions, and interest. Before the money ran out the government of Honduras managed to get thirty-eight miles of the railway built, from Puerto Cortez to San Pedro Sula. This section was begun in 1868 and completed in the late 1870's.¹³¹

By this time, however, the dream of an important inter-oceanic communication through Honduras was shattered by the completion, in 1869, of the transcontinental railroad within the borders of the United States. Writing in 1870 Squier professed to see "no antagonism of interest" between the United States transcontinental route and the Honduras route. He claimed that the ten-day train trip across the continent was "past the limits of human endurance" and far too costly for ordinary passengers and freight. "The great bulk of passengers," he predicted, would prefer the Honduras route.¹³² The transcontinental railroad, however, soon drove the Panama route from the New York-to-San Francisco trade, and although Squier refused to admit it, it also made the Honduras project purely a local concern.

Although the Honduras railway project was never realized, Squier was not entirely disappointed in his expectation of making money from it. It is difficult to assess the extent

¹³¹Victor Herrán, Le Chemin de Fer Interocéanique du Honduras: Étude sur l'Avenir Commercial et Industriel de l'Amérique Centrale (Paris, 1868), 17; Victor Herrán, Documentos oficiales sobre los empréstitos de Honduras (Paris, 1884), *passim*; Silva Ferro, Historical Account of a Railway across Honduras, 15-38; Cecil Charles, Honduras: The Land of Great Depths (Chicago and New York, 1890), 178-81; W. Rodney Long, Railways of Central America and the West Indies (Washington, 1925), 56.

¹³²Squier, Honduras, 262-63.

of his profit from the Honduras venture. While serving as secretary to the New York firm he was supposed to receive an annual salary of \$4,500.¹³³ But it is doubtful that he received all of it; in 1858 he claimed the company owed him \$15,000.¹³⁴ The sale of the charter to the British capitalists netted the American backers some \$100,000, of which Squier undoubtedly received the largest share. Squier's greatest hope for profit, however, depended on the success of the company, in which he held a large number of shares, and on foreign emigration to Honduras, for he held personal title to a sizable block of Honduran land. The company failed, rendering his shares worthless, and the hoped-for emigration failed to materialize, rendering his landholdings valueless. Squier profited substantially from his many years of devotion to the enterprise, but he profited far less than he anticipated.

The partial success of Squier's business and promotional career gave him opportunities which otherwise might have been closed to him. Although he did not make enough money to finance a full-time career of study and writing, he did receive sufficient income to carry out some of his scholarly objectives. He accumulated one of the finest collections of material on Central America in the United States, he traveled extensively in Central America and Europe, and he was able to devote at least part of his time to research and

¹³³Squier to parents, December 31, 1853, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

¹³⁴Squier to parents, March 28, 1858, ibid.

writing.¹³⁵ With these opportunities the indefatigable Squier produced not only a long list of books and articles of promotional interest, but a significant body of scholarly writings on Central America as well.

¹³⁵Joseph Sabin (ed.), Catalogue of the Library of E. G. Squier (New York, 1876).

CHAPTER V

AUTHOR: CENTRAL AMERICAN PUBLICIST

Squier was known to the mid-nineteenth century, and is remembered today, primarily for his work as a writer. An indefatigable worker, he produced during the course of his career ten books and nearly fifty articles and pamphlets on contemporary and pre-Conquest Central America, besides writing books and articles on other subjects, editing newspapers and magazines, and engaging in numerous other activities. Although his first two significant books and his first articles gained him recognition as an authority on North American archaeology, he published very little of importance in this field after going to Central America in 1849. From 1849 to 1863 Squier wrote almost exclusively on Central American subjects, ranging from the frankly polemical to the thoroughly objective. In 1863 he went to Peru as claims commissioner and upon his return to the United States two years later, he was increasingly occupied with the arrangement of his notes for a work on Peru and with his editorial duties with the Illustrated Newspaper. Nevertheless he maintained his interest in Central America, gathering manuscript materials, revising some of his earlier works, and contributing a few original publications, until insanity stilled his pen in the 1870's.

Squier's writings on Central America classify him as both publicist and scholar. In the decade between 1849 and 1859, the period of his greatest productivity, he wrote primarily as a publicist. His writings in this decade were designed principally to justify his own actions as chargé d'affaires, to influence the policy of the United States and Great Britain toward Central America and toward each other, and to publicize the isthmian region to the reading public of the United States and Europe. For two years after his discharge as chargé d'affaires he wrote articles denouncing British "aggression" in Central America and denouncing the United States government for its failure to uphold the Monroe Doctrine and the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. After the negotiation of the charter of the Honduras Inter-oceanic Railway Company in 1853 Squier's writing projects were of course chiefly devoted to publicizing Honduras and the railway project. Success of the enterprise depended on public subscription of the company's stock, and as the most active promoter of the project Squier considered it his duty, as well as to his own interest, to educate the public on the resources and potentialities of the region.

After 1859 it was no longer necessary for Squier to draw attention to contemporary Central America. In the late 1850's Great Britain revealed her intention to submit to the American interpretation of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty by withdrawing her protection of the Mosquito Indians and by returning the Bay Islands to Honduras--actions which may have been speeded up as a result of Squier's agitation. Also, by the end of the 1850's the railway project appeared to be

[doomed to failure; it was at least at the point where further] publicity would do it little good. As Anglo-American relations improved and as prospects for the railway enterprise faded Squier gradually turned more of his attention to the archaeology and ethnology of Central America, subjects that had interested him even before his sojourn of 1849 and 1850 in Nicaragua. Squier's work as a publicist was most important in the decade 1849-1859, and Squier's work as a scholar, although concurrent with his earlier writings, did not begin to predominate until after 1859.

Upon his return to the United States in 1850 Nicaragua and the canal were uppermost in Squier's mind. Although expected by his friends first to publish a work describing his travels and surveying the aboriginal monuments of Nicaragua, Squier shelved plans for a book on Nicaragua for the moment and plunged into the current debate, which was stimulated partly by his own diplomatic mission, on British and American policy in Central America. Five spirited articles on this subject issued from Squier's pen in a little over two years.

One article came out even before Squier's return to the United States. In early 1850, at the height of the discussion of the Tigre Island affair, the American Review, a Whig journal, published an unsigned article called "British Encroachments and Aggressions in Central America; The Mosquito Question." Those close to the situation knew that no one but Squier could have written it. The article consists of a fairly temperate history of British interests on the Mosquito Shore in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, [

but as the period of the mid-nineteenth century is reached, it becomes a virulent attack on British foreign policy in Central America, and especially on Chatfield's dealings with the independent states. Many of the Anglophobic attitudes that were to find their way into Squier's later writings, and indeed into the writings of other authors, are first expressed in this article. He sees the British interests on the Mosquito Shore as a design on the part of the British government to add the whole isthmian region to its empire. The breakup of the federation of Central America is attributed to British policy ably carried out by Chatfield, the motive being to destroy a possible strong opponent to British encroachment. The British seizure of the port of San Juan is viewed as part of an attempt by Great Britain to gain control over the approaches to the proposed Nicaragua canal. Great Britain, according to Squier, did not intend to build the canal but merely wished to prevent the United States from doing so. The article was apparently written before the seizure of Tigre Island, as it contains no reference to that incident.¹

An article bearing directly on Squier's diplomatic mission, entitled "The Great Ship Canal Question: England and Costa Rica versus the United States and Nicaragua," appeared in the Whig journal in November, 1850. This article focuses on the boundary dispute between Costa Rica and Nicaragua, which, because of prospects of a canal, had recently assumed importance. In this article Squier defends Nicaragua's

¹/E. George Squier, "British Encroachments and Aggressions in Central America: The Mosquito Question," American Review, V, n.s. (February, 1850), 188-203; (March, 1850), 235-68.

boundary claims against the "absurd" claims of Costa Rica, backed by Great Britain. He recounts the history of the boundary between the two Central American states, and blames British interference for the bitterness of the dispute, without reference, of course, to his own interference in that dispute. He accuses Great Britain, particularly Chatfield, of establishing an involuntary protectorate over Costa Rica and influencing her to make unjustified claims to Nicaraguan soil--all in order to prevent United States construction and control of the canal.²

Not all of Squier's wrath was aimed at Great Britain. Some of it he directed toward the policy and officials of the United States. After the death of Zachary Taylor and the accession of Millard Fillmore to the presidency in the summer of 1850, Daniel Webster, whom Squier regarded as a drunken "lazy hound,"³ became secretary of state. Webster allowed the Squier treaty with Nicaragua to lie idle in the Senate, and in his attempts to conciliate Great Britain he agreed to the suggestion that Nicaragua relinquish claims to some of the territory in dispute with Nicaragua and that Nicaragua pay an indemnity to the Mosquito King for the evacuation of San Juan. Squier met this suggestion--formally known as the Crampton-Webster projet--with a blistering attack on the Fillmore administration. In an article entitled

²E. George Squier, "The Great Ship Canal Question: England and Costa Rica versus the United States and Nicaragua," American Review, VI, n.s. (November, 1850), 441-55.

³Squier to parents, September 8, 1850, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society. This judgment was rendered a few days before Squier received news of his dismissal from his diplomatic post.

"Judgment by Default: Central America and the Administration," published in March, 1851, Squier accuses the Fillmore administration of "astounding indifference and inaction" as "the British Government occupies half of Nicaragua, governs Guatemala, and blockades the rest of all Central America." He concludes: "We leave our readers to invent a phrase black enough to designate our dishonor."⁴

Although "Judgment by Default" was published in the Whig American Review, Squier was no longer a Whig. As a young newspaperman he had joined the Whig party because he had believed in its domestic policy. His views on foreign policy, however, more closely resembled the chauvinistic "Young America" school of the Democratic party. When a Whig administration discharged Squier and began to reverse Squier's policy of friendship and protection of Nicaragua, thus emptying Squier's promises and endangering his prestige in the three middle Central American states, he left the Whig party in great disgust.

Regarding the Democratic party as the only vehicle for the restoration of his waning prestige in Central America, Squier reserved his most vicious attacks on the Central American policy of the Fillmore administration until the election campaign of 1852. In the October, 1852, issue of the Democratic Review, in an article entitled "Our Foreign Relations: Central America--The Crampton-Webster Project," Squier charges the administration with three "heinous crimes":

⁴/E. George Squier, "Judgment by Default: Central America and the Administration," American Review, VII, n.s. (March, 1851), 281, 282, 283.

first, "it has violated our plighted faith to the Republic of Nicaragua, in becoming the instrument in British hands for the accomplishment of its political humiliation and territorial dismemberment"; secondly, it has violated the Monroe Doctrine "by seeking to make the United States a party with Great Britain, not only to the partition of the friendly Republic of Nicaragua, but to the establishment and protection of a monarchy, of the most offensive description, within its just territorial limits, on the Mosquito Shore"; and thirdly, "it has proved recreant to its duties . . . in permitting the islands in the Bay of Honduras, belonging to the friendly Republic of the same name, to be seized by Great Britain, and organized as a colony of the British crown, in flagrant violation of the Treaty of 1851 [1850] without protest or intervention of any kind." The Fillmore administration, he predicts, "will come to an unhonorable close, leaving the country humiliated at home and disgraced abroad."⁵ Hoping privately to be chosen as the Democratic administration's representative in Central America, Squier closes with an appeal to Central Americans to keep faith in the United States:

Men of the Isthmus! the people of the United States are your friends, they detest the policy of their accidental government, and they will yet redeem the faith which they have plighted to you. Be faithful, be firm, and you will yet reap the reward of your patriotic sacrifices, in the full and complete vindication of your rights. Trust to the future; await patiently the ides of March!⁶

⁵[E. George Squier], "Our Foreign Relations: Central America--The Crampton and Webster Project," Democratic Review, XXXI, n.s. (October, 1852), 337, 338.

⁶Ibid., 352.

The next Squier article, also published just before the election of 1852, was directed alternately against Great Britain and against the Fillmore administration. In "The Islands of the Gulf of Honduras: Their Seizure and Organization as a British Colony," Squier focuses attention on the British proclamation of July 17, 1852, of the establishment of the Bay Islands colony. The proclamation had been practically overlooked by American newspapers, and according to Squier, it had not even attracted "the notice of that weakly-wicked, and wickedly-weak administration, which has weighed like a monstrous night-mare on the country for the past two years." Squier calls for prompt investigation of this "atrocit[y]" and for action to vindicate the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, by which Great Britain agreed not to colonize any part of Central America. The article touched off the first full-scale Congressional debate on the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty and undoubtedly stiffened the official United States attitude toward British policy in Central America.⁷

Other articles written during this period were designed to inform rather than to inflame. One, published in the National Intelligencer, simply describes some familiar Nicaraguan volcanoes and a volcanic eruption witnessed by Squier.⁸ Another, published in the same newspaper, imparts some information about the Segovia (or Coco) River and the Mosquito

⁷ E. George Squier, "The Islands of the Gulf of Honduras: Their Seizure and Organization as a British Colony," Democratic Review, XXXI, n.s. (November-December, 1852), 549.

⁸ E. George Squier, "An Earthquake in Nicaragua," National Intelligencer, February 19, 1850.

[Indians.⁹ Another briefly describes the port of San Juan.¹⁰]

The most significant informative article written during this period was published in the American Review in October, 1850. Entitled "The Spanish American Republics, and the Causes of their Failure: Central America," the article deals with the puzzling problem of the revolutionary habit in Latin America, as exemplified in Central America. Squier shows remarkable understanding of the problem. He does not attribute the "failure" of the Spanish American republics to the deficiencies of the Spanish character, as many superficial writers have done. "There is not," Squier says, "in their individual nor in their collective character anything which renders them incapable of exercising the rights, or enjoying rationally the benefits, of self-government." Instead Squier notes the different periods during which the North and South American colonies were founded, resulting in the establishment of different institutions on the two continents, one favoring the development of self-government, one not. He notes also the difficulties in establishing stable governments among peoples widely varying in culture: "Truly Republican Institutions are the loftiest developments of human wisdom; and their existence pre-supposes, not only a general diffusion of knowledge, but high attainment in it, amongst the people at large. Their permanence depends upon the general intelligence and morality. In the Spanish American

⁹E. George Squier, "Central America--The River Coco--And the Mosquito Indians," National Intelligencer, July 23, 1850.

¹⁰E. George Squier, "Port of San Juan de Nicaragua," ibid., June 19, 1851.

colonies, it is obvious, such attainment was impossible." Squier also observes that orderly government is almost impossible when political opinion is so deeply divided, as it was in Central America, "between the two grand antagonistic principles" of liberalism and conservatism.¹¹

Meanwhile, in the fall of 1851, Squier finished his two-volume work on Nicaragua. Hoping for a wide sale on both sides of the Atlantic Squier, after contracting with D. Appleton and Company for an American edition, went to Great Britain to find a publisher for a simultaneous British edition. With his fierce hatred of British foreign policy trimmed to an occasional shaft at British "pretensions" and British "arrogance" in the manuscript he carried with him, and with British readers eager to learn more about the region which promised to be the location of an isthmian canal and which had caused so much controversy between their country and the United States, Squier had no difficulty in persuading Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans to bring out a British edition.

The book, Squier's first exclusively on a Central American topic, came out in early 1852, published in New York and London almost simultaneously. Its full title--Nicaragua; Its People, Scenery, Monuments, and the Proposed Interoceanic Canal--somewhat disguises the fact that it deals primarily with Squier's personal experiences in Nicaragua. Twenty-five chapters are devoted to the personal narrative,

¹¹E. George Squier, "The Spanish American Republics, and the Causes of their Failure: Central America," American Review, VI, n.s. (October, 1850), 337-44.

two to a general introduction, three to the canal, two to the aborigines, and seven to political history.

Considered as a travel account, and it is as close to that genre as to any other, Squier's Nicaragua is far superior to the average.¹² It presents an excellent panorama of mid-nineteenth-century Nicaragua. For information concerning politics, society, religion, customs, commerce, physical features, and of course for his own role in Nicaraguan affairs, Squier's account is invaluable. Squier was genuinely well-liked in Nicaragua, partly because he himself liked the country, and partly because he symbolized United States interest in Nicaragua's struggle against Great Britain. He was therefore admitted into the intimacies of Nicaraguan life, especially in León, the capital, and was able to observe Nicaraguan customs at close hand. He was an observant guest and he reported what he saw in detail.

Squier did not visit all sections of Nicaragua. His observations were confined to the route he traveled from San Juan to León, plus a few monument-seeking side trips from León, and one trip to the Bay of Fonseca. He covered the most important cities--León, Managua, Masaya, Granada, and Chinandega--but he did not visit the mining areas of the interior nor the Mosquito lands of the east coast. From secondary accounts and from material acquired from the friendly Nicaraguan government Squier describes the resources

¹²A later traveler in Nicaragua, Peter F. Stout, declined to describe León because "Mr. Squier, during his residence, gathered every information concerning it, and has given it publicity; the reader may rely on that writer's truthful and graphic description." Stout, Nicaragua: Past, Present and Future (Philadelphia, 1859), 142.

and characteristics of the areas he did not visit.

Extremely valuable at the time, but of considerably less value now, were Squier's observations on the proposed Nicaragua canal. According to the National Intelligencer, the chapters on the canal constituted "the most valuable portion of the entire work."¹³ At the time of Squier's residence in Nicaragua it was assumed that the canal would follow the San Juan River to Lake Nicaragua, and that there would be little difficulty on this portion of the route. Squier's observations led him to the conclusion that it would be "the most difficult part of the whole enterprise,"¹⁴ and while this conclusion may not have been altogether true, it did serve to call attention to the fact, hitherto neglected, that a canal from the Atlantic to Lake Nicaragua was a major enterprise in itself. Of the various routes from Lake Nicaragua to the Pacific, Squier favors the one via Lake Managua and the Estero Real to the Bay of Fonseca--the so-called Estero Real route. Squier errs, however, in stating that "it probably would not require a canal of more than twenty miles in length to connect" the navigable waters of the Estero Real with Lake Managua;¹⁵ the real distance is closer to fifty than to twenty miles. The best route, a low pass between Lake Nicaragua and the Pacific, was discovered

¹³National Intelligencer, January 17, 1852. Other reviewers agreed: see, for example, New Orleans Price-Current, March 24, 1852; American Review, IX, n.s. (March, 1852), 256.

¹⁴E. George Squier, Nicaragua; Its People, Scenery, Monuments, and the Proposed Interoceanic Canal (2 vols., New York, 1852), II, 227.

¹⁵Ibid., 245.

in 1851 by Orville Childs, surveying for the Vanderbilt canal company.

Squier's Nicaragua is a sprightly, informative, self-vindicating book. As Charles Eliot Norton told Squier, "It is a complete reflex of yourself, full of spirit, talent, animation, enthusiasm, & now & then come in a little cock-a-doodle-doism." It was also timely--"It is a great success,--you have hit the public ear on its very timpanium"--and as a result it sold very well.¹⁶ The first edition of 1,200 copies (for which Squier received \$1.30 a copy) sold before the end of 1852, and another edition was brought out in 1853 under the title Travels in Central America, Particularly in Nicaragua.¹⁷ A third edition, slightly revised, appeared in 1860.

After 1853 Squier's primary interests shifted, because of the railway project, from Nicaragua to Honduras. From March to December, 1853, Squier was in Central America negotiating for the railway charter, examining the route, and exploring parts of Honduras and El Salvador. He traversed the entire route from the Bay of Fonseca to the Bay of Honduras, and after conversing with government officials in Santa Rosa, in the western part of Honduras, he went on to visit the ruins of Copán and returned to the Bay of Fonseca via the principal cities of El Salvador.

Upon his return to New York Squier immediately set to

¹⁶Norton to Squier, January 19, 1852, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

¹⁷"Agreement between E. Geo. Squier . . . and Mess^{rs}. D. Appleton & Co. of New York, Publishers," November 4, 1851, Squier Papers, Middle American Research Institute.

work on the first of three reports on the railway project. Within a month he published the modestly entitled pamphlet Preliminary Notes to a Report on the Proposed Honduras Inter-oceanic Railway. It was issued "for the information solely of the Associates" who had supported the expedition, while Squier and Jeffers worked on a more extensive report. The pamphlet consists of a map of the line of the road sketched by Squier and extracts of letters from Squier to Edwards and from Jeffers to Squier. It contains no hint of the important political questions discussed by Squier and Cabañas, nor does it refer to the aid rendered the Honduras government by the company. Of course it finds the route "much the best and most favorable line of communication between the seas."¹⁸

Several months later, after Edwards' return from Honduras with the ratification of the charter, Squier issued a more detailed report called Honduras Interoceanic Railway: Preliminary Report. It was called "preliminary" because Lieutenant Jeffers "almost immediately after his return to the United States, was ordered to the Brazil Squadron" and "his complete report has not yet been received."¹⁹ In the sixty-three-page pamphlet Squier describes the topography of the line of the road by sections and includes data compiled by Jeffers on Puerto Caballos and the Bay of Fonseca. He also discusses the issues of available labor and supplies, and compares the Honduras route with the other isthmian

¹⁸E. George Squier, Preliminary Notes to a Report on the Proposed Honduras Interoceanic Railway (New York, 1854), 3.

¹⁹E. George Squier, Honduras Interoceanic Railway: Preliminary Report (New York, 1854), 5.

routes. According to Squier's calculations the Honduras route would save New York-to-San Francisco passengers 500 miles over the Nicaragua route and 1000 miles over the Panama route. The Tehuantepec route, admittedly as short as the Honduras route, is dismissed because of its lack of ports.²⁰ In conclusion Squier writes:

I unhesitatingly claim for the proposed route, via Honduras, in respect not only of distance, but in freedom from detentions and delays resulting from bad ports, adverse winds, and frequent changes, a clear and emphatic superiority over all routes which have been proposed across the Central American Isthmus.²¹

A third report was published in 1857, while Squier was in Europe attempting to attract European investors to the project. The only distinguishing features of this report (in comparison with the earlier ones) were the addition of an endorsement of the railway by Admiral Robert Fitz-Roy of the British navy and the addition of material on distances from England to the Far East via Honduras.²² Another pamphlet on the railway project, in the form of a letter to the provisional directors of the contemplated British company, appeared in late 1856. It contains a history of Squier's efforts in behalf of the enterprise, including his attempts to settle the Bay Islands dispute, and outlines a proposal to sell the charter and its privileges to interested British

²⁰Squier, Honduras Interoceanic Railway: Preliminary Report, 34-43.

²¹Ibid., 35.

²²Squier, States of Central America, 773; Bancroft, Central America, III, 263 n.

capitalists.²³

Squier was in New York for a total of seventeen months between his return from the Honduras exploration and his mission to Europe. During that time, besides compiling the two railway reports and writing three articles, he published two significant books. The first was a novel--Waikna; or Adventures on the Mosquito Shore--and the second was a survey of the states of Honduras and El Salvador.

Waikna, Squier's first and only novel, and a highly successful one, combines fiction with polemics. It is an engaging tale of a young artist who, upon being put out of work as a portrait painter by the death of his subject, sets out for the Mosquito Shore "for study and inspiration."²⁴ The hero blunders through a number of narrow escapes from shipwreck and flood to Indian attacks, always aided by his faithful Indian servant Antonio, who turns out to be of royal Maya descent. Journeying to Bluefields by sea, the travelers make their way along the Mosquito Shore by foot and boat until they reach the Segovia River, where they turn inland. They return to the coast, after numerous encounters with Indians, some friendly, some hostile, by way of the Patuca River, and end their wanderings at Roatán Island.

²³E. George Squier, Communication from E. G. Squier, Esq., Agent and Attorney of the Grantees and Proprietors of the charter of the Honduras Interoceanic Railway Company, to the Provisional Directors of the Said Company in Great Britain (London, 1856), 1-14.

²⁴This is a reviewer's interpretation. The author himself did not explain why the young artist went to the Mosquito Shore. See Harper's New Monthly Magazine, LXIII (August, 1855), 404; E. George Squier, Waikna; or Adventures on the Mosquito Shore (New York, 1855), 10-15.

Without ever having been to the Mosquito Shore, except at San Juan, Nicaragua and Omoa, Honduras, Squier manages to give Waikna an air of authenticity. The narrative includes vivid descriptions of customs and ceremonies of Indian tribes and "glowing descriptions of the glorious forest scenery and abounding vegetation."²⁵ John Bozman Kerr, United States minister to Central America after Squier, pronounced it "evidently truthful" and "graphic."²⁶ "It is not often in fact," reported the Saturday Review, "that within the compass of little more than three hundred pages, we have met with so much entertaining, and readable matter."²⁷ Squier's story is based partly on information gleaned from conversations with persons who had been to the Shore and partly on previously published books, particularly those of Thomas Young and Thomas Strangeways.²⁸

Squier's talent for denunciation, used frequently in his career, is here directed against the Mosquito Indians. "Altogether, the Mosquitoes," he said, "have little in their character to commend. Their besetting vice is drunkenness, which has obliterated all of their better traits. Without religion, with no idea of government, they are capricious,

²⁵Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art, II (July 26, 1856), 303.

²⁶"Miscellaneous Notes," John A. Bozman Papers, Library of Congress.

²⁷Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art, II (July 26, 1856), 304.

²⁸Thomas Young, Narrative of a Residence on the Mosquito Shore, During the Years 1839, 1840 & 1841 (London, 1842); Thomas Strangeways, Sketch of the Mosquito Shore, Including the Territory of Poyas (Edinburgh, 1822).

indolent, improvident, treacherous, and given to thieving. All attempts to advance their condition have been melancholy failures."²⁹ This condemnation, not wholly without justification, has been echoed by Squier's reviewers, newspapers, and later writers.

A high point of the story is the artist's meeting of George William Clarence, the Mosquito King. The artist stayed overnight at the residence of a British official in Bluefields, unaware that the "sloven youth" who resided with the Englishman was not a servant but the King. According to Squier, the King "is nothing more or less than a negro, with hardly a perceptible trace of Indian blood, and would pass at the South for 'a likely young fellow, worth twelve hundred dollars as a body-servant!'"³⁰

The judgment on the Mosquitoes and the account of the Mosquito King illustrate the principal purpose of the book, which is to turn support of "Queen Victoria's august ally of Mosquito into contempt."³¹ Other barbs of criticism, though mostly in a light-hearted vein, are directed at the British occupation of the Bay Islands and the alleged British maltreatment of the Central American republics. Squier hoped, by this means, to influence the British public to force abandonment of British holdings in the Central American region. In order not to incur British hostility to himself and to the railway project, however, the book, which had

²⁹Squier, Waikna, 245.

³⁰Ibid., 64.

³¹Squier to parents, July 31, 1856, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

at least two British editions, ~~was~~ published under the pseudonym of Samuel Bard.³²

Notes on Central America, the other book written between Squier's exploring expedition to Honduras and his capital-seeking trip to Europe, came out in late 1855. It was immediately recognized as the most reliable source of information on the countries it dealt with--Honduras and El Salvador--and within a year of its publication British, Spanish, French, and German editions were issued and the second American printing was exhausted.³³ The product of Squier's tireless pursuit of statistical data in countries where few statistics were kept, the book was a remarkable achievement and is an invaluable compilation of facts which has yet to be entirely superseded.

It is aptly described by a reviewer as "a very interesting and important statistical report upon the topography and resources" of the two countries.³⁴ It is in no sense a travel account modeled after Nicaragua; Squier simply presents in this book as much significant data on the climate, topography, natural resources, products, and population of the two countries as he was able to accumulate. Squier did not claim that his work was definitive. "No one," he said,

³²Squier to parents, July 31, 1856, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

³³J. B. Davis to Squier, February 26, 1856, Squier Papers, Library of Congress; Bentley's Miscellany, XXXIX (1856), 263; London Athenaeum, No. 1476 (February 9, 1856), 161-62; Allibone, A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors, II, 2215; Edwards to Squier, January 21, 1857, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

³⁴Bentley's Miscellany, XXXIX (1856), 263.

"can be more sensible of the defects of this memoir, and its deficiencies in respect to several important subjects of inquiry and interest, than myself." He regarded the book as "a point of departure for other investigators, who by correcting its errors and gradually supplying its omissions, shall finally complete the design of presenting to the world a full and accurate view of . . . the various divisions of Central America."³⁵

Anglophobia, a malady which clung to Squier's thinking even after he made numerous English friends and his railway project became dependent on British capital, pervades portions of his Notes on Central America. In an appendix on the Bay Islands, for instance, Squier claims to have uncovered "a system of aggression on the rights and sovereignty of Honduras unparalleled for its persistency, and terminating in a series of frauds which approach the sublime of effrontery." Great Britain occupies the islands, according to Squier, "on pretexts so bald and fallacious that they serve only to render conspicuous the crimes which they were designed to conceal."³⁶ It must be said, however, that few of these outbursts occur in the main body of the book, which is generally temperate and circumspect in tone.

By 1855 Squier's ideas on the malaise of Central America had amply developed and they find full expression for the

³⁵E. George Squier, Notes on Central America; Particularly the States of Honduras and San Salvador, Their Geography, Topography, Climate, Population, Resources, Productions, &c., &c., and the Proposed Honduras Inter-Oceanic Railway (New York, 1855), xv.

³⁶Ibid., 377.

first time in his Notes. In 1851, after his first visit to Central America, Squier believed that the "distractions" of the five republics were "not so much to be ascribed to the insensate passions of their people as to foreign intervention, and the unfavorable conditions which surround them." And he optimistically pointed out that in all of the republics there was "a large body of devoted, patriotic, and liberal men, who are struggling against the popular ignorance and superstition . . . to vindicate the principles of self-government and free institutions."³⁷ By the time Squier visited Central America again he was coming to the conclusion that the republics had abandoned the path of progress and were lapsing into decline. "I am constrained to say," he told Barrundia in 1853, "and I do it with sorrow, that I am now less sanguine, in my hopes for Central America than when I first visited the country. What can be expected when ignorance pervades the masses of a community, and selfishness, suspicion and treachery are the characteristics of its public men?"³⁸ In his Notes, published two years later, Squier was even more pessimistic: "If existing causes and conditions continue to operate, many years can not pass before some of these countries will have relapsed into a state not far removed from that in which they were found at the period of the conquest."³⁹

He now believed that the ills of Central America were attributable to the racial problem. Central America's

³⁷Squier, Nicaragua, I, xx-xxi.

³⁸Squier to Barrundia, June 9, 1853, Squier Papers, Huntington Library.

³⁹Squier, Notes on Central America, 56.

decline, according to Squier, was "due to a grand practical misconception of the just relations of the races." According to Squier's calculations, the "inferior" races, or the Indians and Negroes, were steadily absorbing the "superior" or European element in Central America. Since all miscegenation resulted in offspring "generally deficient in physical constitution, in intellect, and in moral restraint," the mixture of the races in Central America was leading to a dark future indeed.⁴⁰

But Squier had a natural and logical answer to the dilemma. "The only hope of Central America," he concluded, "consists in averting the numerical decline of its white population, and increasing that element in the composition of its people."⁴¹ By the encouragement of emigration and colonization, "which shall ultimately secure the predominance of white blood," Central America could still avert the descent into barbarism.⁴² Though Squier appears to have held sincerely these opinions (they underwent no appreciable change in later years), it is no accident that Squier and his railway associates stood to profit by the solution recommended. By directing emigration to Central America Squier hoped to increase the number of users of the projected railway and buyers of railway company lands.

Hoping to attract American and European emigrants Squier,

⁴⁰Squier, Notes on Central America, 56.

⁴¹Ibid., 58; see also New York Herald, January 26, 1857, quoting Michel Chevalier's review of Notes on Central America in the Journal des Debats.

⁴²Squier, Notes on Central America, 234.

in Notes on Central America, usually overenthusiastically describes Honduras' resources. For instance, in surveying the country department by department, he finds all sections of the country abounding in silver, gold, and copper mines, awaiting only "the touch of intelligence, enterprise, and capital" to make them profitable.⁴³ On the other hand Squier is to be commended for his restraint. He makes no attempt to gloss over the "feeble" educational system, the "vitiated" currency, the "eternal anarchy," nor "the free amalgamation" of the races in Honduras.⁴⁴ It is remarkable, in view of his special interest in the promotion of the region, that he should have produced such a balanced account.

While in Europe from May, 1855, to March, 1857, Squier devoted his time to the railway project and to the Honduras negotiations in London. Consequently he had little time left to write. The only item worthy of note published during this period, other than the completed railway report, was a compilation of documents--mostly correspondence between American ministers to Great Britain and Lord Clarendon--on the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, edited by Squier and published in French. Question Anglo-Américaine, as the publication was entitled, added little to published information on the Central American Question, since most if not all its contents had been published before in English, but it did serve perhaps to awaken the French to a realization of their interest in the isthmian.

⁴³Squier, Notes on Central America, 131.

⁴⁴Ibid., 55, 57, 228, 229.

regions.⁴⁵

After Squier's return to New York he turned his attention to the preparation of his magnum opus--The States of Central America. Though deeply involved in the supervision of the Trautwine surveying expedition throughout most of the year Squier worked feverishly, as always, and had the work ready for publication by the summer of 1858.

States of Central America probably contains more reliable information on the five republics of Central America than any work published before Bancroft's monumental production of the 1880's. It is not merely a revision of the previously published Notes on Central America; it is rather a lengthy extension of that book. The sections on Honduras and El Salvador, comprising some 300 pages, are substantially the same as the corresponding sections in the previous publication, but with some important additions. Up-to-date commercial statistics, new material on the aboriginal population, and numerous additional lithographs distinguish the new from the old. Sections on Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Belize are entirely new, and the section on the Honduras Interoceanic Railway, based on new data acquired by the Trautwine expedition, is a much more authoritative statement.

The composition of the sections devoted to each of the five republics reflect Squier's personal interests and attitudes. Honduras, of course, draws the most space. Counting the section on the railway project, Honduras gets approximately

⁴⁵E. George Squier, Question Anglo-Américaine: Documents Officiels échangés entre les États-Unis et l'Angleterre au sujet de l'Amérique Centrale et du Traité Clayton-Bulwer (Paris, 1856).

280 pages, almost a third of the book, and the unifying theme is the plethora of mines and lands awaiting adequate transportation and skillful hands to make them productive. El Salvador and Costa Rica receive two short chapters apiece, with physical features and aboriginal inhabitants featured in the section on El Salvador and commercial statistics and foreign colonization projects emphasized in the section on Costa Rica. The 100-page portion on Nicaragua contains graphic descriptions of customs and habits of the people, a lengthy account of the mysterious Guatuso Indians (but very little on other Nicaraguan Indians), and an analysis of the failure of the Nicaragua canal project. Two of the four chapters on Guatemala are concerned with contemporary Guatemala--its topography, productions, population, and commerce--and the other two consist primarily of an historical account of the attempts to subdue the Itzá and Lacandón Indians.

For Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua Squier relies primarily on his own observations for information, for he had traveled extensively in each of those countries. He had not visited either Guatemala or Costa Rica, however, and for information on those countries he depends on such authors as John L. Stephens, Arthur Morelet, Robert G. Dunlop, and John Baily, whose books are all quoted, with acknowledgement, by Squier.

Squier's attitudes toward each of the five republics do not stand out or dominate the narrative. Squier the scholar is notably successful in restraining his subjective judgments and confining himself to a methodical presentation of facts. Nevertheless, prejudices in favor of the three

middle states and against the two peripheral states are discernible. Honduras, of course, is "liberal in politics and religion" and looks to the United States to help in "repelling those prejudices" emanating from "demagogues in Mexico and Guatemala."⁴⁶ Nicaragua's constitution "is thoroughly republican in its provisions . . . and needs only to be faithfully administered to meet all the purposes of a sound political organization." "If it does not do this," he continues, "the causes of its failure lie elsewhere--in the circumstances of the people."⁴⁷ El Salvador, Squier asserts, "possesses, beyond question, the most enlightened population and most liberal government of any of the Central American states."⁴⁸ Costa Ricans, on the other hand, "could have good roads and buildings . . . but, like children, they rebel against the patient exertion which is necessary to secure them."⁴⁹ For the people of Guatemala Squier reserves his severest epithets. He claims that they lack "education, enterprise, and habits of industry" and that they are "bigoted" and "conceited." "In short," he concludes, "the whole government, in its principles, spirit, and practice, is reactionary in the extreme, and it is difficult to say if political selfishness or religious bigotry

⁴⁶E. George Squier, The States of Central America; Their Geography, Topography, Climate, Population, Resources, Productions, Commerce, Political Organizations, Aborigines, etc., etc. (New York, 1858), 274.

⁴⁷Ibid., 416.

⁴⁸Ibid., 312.

⁴⁹Ibid., 477.

be the leading element in its composition."⁵⁰

Probably the greatest defect of the book is the absence of comment on political affairs. It is difficult to conceive of a book on Central America published in 1858 containing not a single reference to William Walker, whose exploits in Nicaragua were front-page news the world over. Yet Squier, who, in the introduction, states that his book is partly an answer to the need for information created by the "startling events in Nicaragua,"⁵¹ does not mention Walker once in the text. The evasion of the Walker issue is perhaps to be attributed to the problem the filibuster created for Squier. Squier believed that Nicaragua would ultimately fall to United States control, and theoretically he could not disapprove of what appeared to be Manifest Destiny with Walker as the agent. But on the other hand he could not approve of Walker for Walker was creating a situation harmful--because alarming to capitalists--to the Honduras railway project. Squier evaded the problem, along with any other problems that might have arisen from his expressed opinions of Central American political leaders, by remaining silent. The only political figure discussed in the 782-page book is Carrera, who is unflinchingly denounced as a vain, avaricious, bloodthirsty tool of the Church.⁵²

Between books Squier kept the public's attention on Central America with several popular articles. An article

⁵⁰Squier, States of Central America, 517, 518, 516.

⁵¹Ibid., x.

⁵²Ibid., 515.

on the port of San Juan, describing the changes which had taken place since his 1851 article on the same subject, appeared in December, 1854.⁵³ "Nicaragua; an Exploration from Ocean to Ocean," following soon after, tells of Squier's trip from San Juan to the Bay of Fonseca in 1853.⁵⁴ In 1859 Harper's New Monthly Magazine published "The Volcanos of Central America," which describes the principal isthmian volcanoes, so far as they were known, and recounts some of the attempts to climb them.⁵⁵ Another article, "Hunting a Pass," relating the search for a gap in the mountains of Honduras, was designed to appear serially in the Atlantic Monthly, but after the second installment it was dropped, indicating that public interest in Central America had begun to lag.⁵⁶

Honduras; Descriptive, Historical, and Statistical, published in 1870, is Squier's last attempt to draw public attention to contemporary Central America.⁵⁷ Most of it is taken from States, but there are a few changes. Some of the uncomplimentary details concerning Honduras' financial and educational systems have been deleted, and the story of the

⁵³E. George Squier, "San Juan de Nicaragua," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, X (December, 1854), 50-61.

⁵⁴E. George Squier, "Nicaragua; an Exploration from Ocean to Ocean," ibid., XI (October, 1855), 577-90; (November, 1855), 744-63.

⁵⁵E. George Squier, "The Volcanos of Central America," ibid., XIX (November, 1859), 739-62.

⁵⁶E. George Squier, "Hunting a Pass: A Sketch of Tropical Adventure," Atlantic Monthly, V (April, 1860), 447-57; VI (July, 1860), 44-58.

⁵⁷E. George Squier, Honduras; Descriptive, Historical, and Statistical (London, 1870).

railway project is brought up to date. Most remarkable, in view of the completion of the transcontinental railway within the borders of the United States the year before, is the steadfastness of Squier's faith in the Honduras railway, which in the 1860's passed from his control. Squier claims that the transcontinental railway "is rather a political than a commercial undertaking" and that "it can never compete with the sea route via the Isthmus of Honduras."⁵⁸

⁵⁸Squier, Honduras, 262.

CHAPTER VI

AUTHOR: CENTRAL AMERICAN SCHOLAR

Squier's writings on Central America involve several modern academic disciplines, all of which have benefited to some extent from his work. Specialists acknowledge indebtedness to Squier's pioneering efforts in the fields of history, geography, and anthropology, though it is probable that no modern scholar would venture to say that Squier made a single great historical, geographical, or anthropological contribution to present-day knowledge of Central America. Neither would many modern writers venture to label any of Squier's works on Central America as a "classic" or as a "standard," terms not infrequently used to describe Ancient Monuments. Yet in all of these fields, and especially in anthropology, Squier made contributions which, when considered collectively, make Squier an outstanding pioneer in the study of Central America.

Squier's works in the field of history may still be profitably consulted for a quick review of Central American history but they no longer command the attention of scholars. In Nicaragua and in States of Central America, Squier summarized the history of the Republic of Central America from its independence until the 1850's, drawing largely from the works of Robert G. Dunlop, Frederick Crowe, and John L.

Stephens. While for the most part his history was accurate as to facts, it contained nothing original and it was decidedly biased in favor of the Liberal interpretation of Central American history. To Squier the Liberal leader Francisco Morazán "was the impersonation of progress and freedom, the idol of a republican and lawfully constituted soldiery," while the Conservative leader Rafael Carrera was the impersonation "of retrogradation and tyranny, and the blind leader of fanatic and tumultuous hordes animated by hate and lust, and eager for pillage, revenge, and murder."¹ The ever-present anti-British bias distorted Squier's historical writing even further.

Squier did not deal extensively with the history of the Conquest or of the colonial period, but in his books and in various articles he touched on these subjects. In promoting the Honduras railway project he wrote of the conquest of Honduras and of the establishment of Honduran towns, but his primary interest was to show that the conquistadores and their first descendants had found the Honduras isthmian route and had recognized its potential usefulness.

His search for documentation of early Spanish interest in the Honduras route led Squier to accumulate copies of assorted valuable documents from the Spanish archives, acquired through his friend Buckingham Smith, who as a United States diplomatic official in Spain had himself become interested in Spanish American history. Later Squier hired Pascual de Gayangos to search for and copy other Spanish archival

¹Squier, Nicaragua, II, 428-29.

materials.² By the late 1850's, as the failure of the Honduras Inter-oceanic Railway Company was becoming increasingly apparent, Squier's interest gradually broadened. He began to collect Spanish documents dealing not only with Honduras, but with all of Central America and Mexico as well. He envisioned a grand scheme of translating and publishing these valuable documents for the benefit of scholars all over the world. In what was to be a "collection of Rare and Original Documents Concerning the Discovery and Conquest of America, Chiefly from the Spanish Archives," Squier intended to translate and publish various "relaciones" from Diego de Palacios, Gil González Dávila, Pedro de Alvarado, Pedrarias Dávila, and others.³ Of course there was no hope of making money from such a project; Squier hoped only "to meet the cost of preserving the valuable records of Spanish achievement in America" by relying on the "great reading public of Europe and America."⁴ Squier's optimism, as so frequently happened in his career, outstripped reality, for the "great reading public" did not support his worthy venture. Only one of his "Collection of Rare and Original Documents" was published: Carta dirigida al Rey de España por el Dr. Don Diego de Palacios, Oydor de la

²Pascual de Gayangos to Squier, June 21, 1867, Squier Papers, Library of Congress. Hubert H. Bancroft purchased many of these documents in 1876 when Squier's library was sold. John W. Caughey, Hubert Howe Bancroft: Historian of the West (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1946), 76.

³E. George Squier, Carta dirigida al Rey de España por el Dr. Don Diego de Palacios, Oydor de la Real Audiencia de Guatemala, Año 1576 (New York, 1860), iv; Las Novedades de Madrid, September 28, 1860, clipping in Squier Papers, Middle American Research Institute.

⁴Unidentified and undated clipping in ibid.

[Real Audiencia de Guatemala, Año 1576. It contained Palacio's account of the ruins of Copán and of the native inhabitants of the area around Copán. As the only detailed description of this area written in the sixteenth century it is of great interest to ethnologists and archaeologists. An archaeological work published in 1938 reprinted five pages of the Carta dirigida al Rey,⁵ indicating that Squier performed a lasting service to students of the Copán area by unearthing and publishing Palacio's letter.

Two interesting historical articles, written by Squier in 1848, reveal that he had read a good deal about the Spanish Conquest even before he received his diplomatic appointment to Central America. One is entitled "Gold Hunting in California, in the Sixteenth Century." The primary purpose of the article was apparently to amuse the gold-mad public by pointing out that it had all happened before when Coronado probed the interior of the North American continent in the sixteenth century searching for riches. Strangely enough, however, despite the title, the emphasis was not on the Spanish search for gold, but the Spanish accomplishment in exploring the American Southwest.⁶ The second article, "New Mexico and California," continued the same theme. Squier marveled at the extent of

⁵William Duncan Strong, Alfred Kidder, II, and A. J. Drexel Paul, Jr., Preliminary Report on the Smithsonian Institution-Harvard University Archaeological Expedition to Northwestern Honduras, 1936 (Washington, 1938), 11-16. See also Doris Stone, The Archaeology of Central and Southern Honduras ("Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University," Vol. XLIX, No. 3; Cambridge, 1957), 83.

⁶E. George Squier, "Gold Hunting in California, in the Sixteenth Century," American Review, III, n.s. (January, 1849), 84-88.

Spanish exploration "within fifteen years after Cortez sub-
verted the Empire of Montezuma," and "nearly one hundred years
before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth."⁷ He was rare among
nineteenth-century writers in his emphasis on Spanish achieve-
ments rather than on Spanish greed for gold.

In the 1850's, when Squier began writing about Central
America, the region, geographically, was virtually unknown.
Maps were available but they were full of inaccuracies and
guesswork. Squier was not far wrong in stating that "the
latest maps, some of which are sufficiently pretentious, are
for the most part conjectural, and the geographical features
which they indicate are wholly inapplicable to the country
which they profess to represent."⁸ Squier did a great deal
to increase geographical knowledge of the area, especially
in Honduras and El Salvador. He drew maps of the interior
of Honduras and El Salvador, presented up-to-date information
on the mineral and agricultural resources of the region, and
described in detail the climate and topography of all the
regions he visited. As late as 1938 it could be said: "Al-
though perhaps unduly optimistic on some points, Squier's
various reports remain the best general geographic descrip-
tion of Honduras."⁹ Few works published since Squier's time

⁷E. George Squier, "New Mexico and California: The An-
cient Monuments, and the Aboriginal, Semi-Civilized Nations
of New Mexico and California; with an Abstract of the Early
Spanish Explorations and Conquests in Those Regions, Particu-
larly Those Now Falling Within the Territory of the United
States," American Review, II, n.s. (November, 1848), 517.

⁸Squier, States of Central America, xii.

⁹Strong, Kidder, and Paul, Preliminary Report on Archaeo-
logical Expedition to Northwestern Honduras, 3 n.

provided as much general geographical information on Central America as did his States of Central America, a book which included most of the geographical data he had accumulated in eight years of intermittent study and exploration of the region.

Some geographical articles were written after the publication of States of Central America. Squier's article on Lake Yojoa in Honduras, which appeared in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London in 1860, was the first complete description of that lake, which, according to Squier, had never appeared on maps of Central America before 1850.¹⁰ In 1938 this article was regarded as "still the authority" on Lake Yojoa.¹¹ Other writings by Squier of a geographical nature include an article on the volcanoes of Central America, one on "The Unexplored Regions of Central America" (primarily on the Petén), and an unpublished memoir sent to the State Department on the Nicaragua canal route.¹² Some segments of his States of Central America dealing with geography appeared separately in the French reviews Bulletin de la Société de

¹⁰E. George Squier, "Some Account of the Lake of Yojoa or Taulebé, in Honduras, Central America," Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London, XIII (1860), 58-63.

¹¹Strong, Kidder, and Paul, Preliminary Report on Archaeological Expedition to Northwestern Honduras, 6 n.

¹²Squier, "The Volcanos of Central America," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XIX (November, 1859), 739-62; E. George Squier, "The Unexplored Regions of Central America," Historical Magazine, IV (March, 1860), 65-67. An expanded version of the latter article, with the same title, appeared in Putnam's Magazine, II, n.s. (November, 1868), 549-61. E. George Squier, "Observations on the Route of the Proposed Canal across the Isthmus of Nicaragua: With Notices of the Resources Climate &c &c of the Country." The latter is a 72-page memoir sent to Secretary of State Clayton October 10, 1849. Diplomatic Despatches, Guatemala, II, National Archives.

Geographie and Nouvelles Annales de Voyages.¹³

The science of anthropology in Squier's time was at an early stage of its development. Few rules had been laid down for its practice and few men devoted their scholarly efforts solely to anthropological studies. Yet versatile scholars were gradually enlarging the world's knowledge of mankind through the discovery and examination of artifacts (archaeology), and the comparison of peoples (ethnology), races (physical anthropology), and languages (linguistics). Squier made varying contributions to all of these branches of anthropology.

Squier's reputation as a discoverer of artifacts and archaeological sites, earned as a result of his studies in Ohio, led his scientific friends to expect him to duplicate his previous feats in Central America. Stephens' rediscovery of Maya cities in Guatemala and Yucatan had opened up vast possibilities of more extensive exploration for new sites and for more systematic study of old ones. Squier was expected to provide details of the ancient Central American civilizations publicized by Stephens. Much to the disappointment of many of his scientific friends, who were shocked at his becoming involved in "an intemperate species of diplomatic action," Squier was unable to do in Central America what he had done in Ohio.¹⁴ His diplomatic duties were so heavy that little time remained for exploration and systematic measurement of

¹³Rafael Heliodoro Valle, "Ephraim George Squier (Notas bio-bibliográficas)," Memorias y Revista de la Sociedad Científica "Antonio Alzate," XL (October, 1922), 516-17; Frank Squier (ed.), A Collection of Books, 40; Seitz, Letters from Parkman to Squier, 55; Rafael Heliodoro Valle, Bibliografía Maya (Mexico City, n.d.), 306.

¹⁴New Orleans Delta, December 31, 1849.

Central American sites. Furthermore the exigencies of Anglo-American isthmian rivalry compelled Squier (or so he thought) to remain in the countries of Nicaragua and El Salvador, territories which happened to be outside the fringe of the great Maya civilization. Thus Squier was not able to continue the studies of the Maya that Stephens had so ably marked out.

Nevertheless Squier did not idly yearn for destiny to take him to the centers of Central American prehistoric civilization; he began immediately to explore the area in which he found himself. Squier observed, upon entering the city of León, Nicaragua in July, 1849, that a statue, apparently carved out of stone by the ancient inhabitants, occupied a prominent spot in the principal plaza of the city. He early resolved to visit the island from which it came, Momotombito, in Lake Managua. On July 26 Squier set out to explore the island, accompanied by his artist, by a Nicaraguan priest, and by the United States consul in León, Joseph Livingston. They spent part of one day on the island and found numerous stone statues which were still held, according to Squier, in some reverence by the Indians. Instead of exploring what seemed to be an extensive archaeological site Squier directed his efforts to getting the largest statue, along with some other fragments, aboard the small bongo and back to the shore of the lake.¹⁵ The stone statue and the fragments were carted to the port of Realejo, and from there they were shipped

¹⁵Squier, Nicaragua, I, 301-303, 313-17.

around Cape Horn to Washington and the Smithsonian Institution.¹⁶ Other artifacts, some brought to him by friendly Nicaraguan Indians, were donated to the New-York Historical Society.¹⁷

The negotiation of the canal contract and the Squier treaty and the Tigre crisis kept Squier busy for the next few months. But as soon as a lull in his rivalry with Chatfield occurred, Squier planned a more extensive archaeological expedition. He had heard that more stone statues were located on the islands of Pensacola and Zapatero in Lake Nicaragua and in December, 1849, he set out with his troop to visit them. One day's exploration on Pensacola resulted in the discovery of only one sizable statue, which the crew set upright for the artist to draw. Next day, on Zapatero Island, Squier discovered a cluster of mounds in an advanced state of decay and about twenty stone statues resembling those of Momotombito and Pensacola scattered about among the mounds. All of the Zapatero statues were set upright for the artist to draw and Squier drew a plan (though he provided no scale) showing the location of the mounds and statues.¹⁸

On another archaeological excursion Squier visited Lake Nihapa, near Granada, Nicaragua, and examined some paintings or carvings on the rock cliffs overhanging the lake. One painting, Squier observed, was of a plumed serpent coiled to

¹⁶David T. Brown to Squier, May 31, 1850, Squier Papers, Library of Congress; National Intelligencer, February 16, 1850.

¹⁷Francis Parkman to Squier, November 18, 1849, in Seitz, Letters from Parkman to Squier, 25.

¹⁸Squier, Nicaragua, II, 33-57.

resemble the sun. To Squier they seemed "precisely in the style and of the character of those found in the ancient Mexican and Guatemalan MSS."¹⁹ Later investigators could find no trace of the mysterious paintings.²⁰

Rumors reported in the newspapers that Squier had discovered "an ancient city, buried beneath the forest . . . which far surpasses the architectural wonders of Palenque" apparently stemmed from exaggerated reports of the Zapatero site.²¹

Squier wrote lengthily of his discoveries to John R. Bartlett, who read excerpts from Squier's letters before the New-York Historical Society and the American Ethnological Society, but Squier made no unusual claims concerning the statues or the Zapatero site.²² In fact he did not attempt to analyze what he had found at all, even in his book Nicaragua, published two years later. In Nicaragua and in "Observations on the Archaeology and Ethnology of Nicaragua," a lengthy article published by the American Ethnological Society, he described as fully as he could the stone statues that he had found and he reproduced drawings of them.²³ He said that one

¹⁹Squier, Nicaragua, I, 403-410.

²⁰Hubert H. Bancroft, The Native Races of the Pacific States of North America (5 vols., New York, 1874-1876), IV, 38 n.

²¹New Orleans Delta, November 5, 1849; New Orleans Price-Current, October 31, 1849; New Orleans Crescent, October 29, 1849.

²²Squier to John R. Bartlett, October 10, 1849, in London Literary Gazette, January 19, 1850; Bartlett to Squier, October 23, December 10, 1849, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

²³Squier, Nicaragua, II, 58-66; E. George Squier, "Observations on the Archaeology and Ethnology of Nicaragua," in Transactions of the American Ethnological Society, III (1853), 119-23.

of the statues reminded him of the "ornamental featherwork so common in the ancient monuments of Mexico, Yucatan, and Central America," but he was careful not to make a positive statement concerning their origin.²⁴ The mounds of Zapatero, he thought, were "like those of Mexico," but he made no comment on the relative importance of the site.²⁵ On the whole Squier's account of his discoveries was admirably cautious and restrained.

Few scholars have since commented on Squier's findings. J. F. Bransford, a medical officer in the United States Navy who accompanied a surveying expedition to Nicaragua in 1876, saw some of the statues described by Squier but did not appreciably alter Squier's account. He concentrated on Nicaraguan pottery fragments of his own discovery. In contrast to Squier, Bransford noted little Maya or Aztec influence in Nicaraguan antiquities; he thought the fragments and stone statues he saw were made by people akin to South American Indians,²⁶ the professional archaeological opinion held today. Carl Bovallius conducted a more thorough examination of Nicaraguan archaeology in the 1880's. He corrected some of the details of Squier's descriptions, described some statues and ceramic objects that Squier had neglected, and referred to Squier's "splendid work" as the first to deal with Nicaraguan archaeology.²⁷ S. K.

²⁴Squier, Nicaragua, I, 322.

²⁵Ibid., II, 57.

²⁶J. F. Bransford, Archaeological Researches in Nicaragua (Washington, 1881), 81.

²⁷Carl Bovallius, Nicaraguan Antiquities (Stockholm, 1886), 8, 33-40.

Lothrop, the only twentieth-century writer to comment extensively on the Nicaraguan stone statues, acknowledged Squier's pioneering work in calling attention to archaeological sites in the fringe areas of Maya civilization. Lothrop concluded that the statues were of Chorotegan origin and definitely were not made by Aztecs or Mayas.²⁸

When Squier visited Central America for a second time, in 1853, his main interest was promotional. He wished to establish the feasibility of the Honduras railway route and to negotiate with the government of Honduras for the right to cross the country. Still, archaeology seems never to have been far from his mind, for he devoted part of his time to the exploration of archaeological sites in Honduras and El Salvador, a region on the fringe of the great Maya civilization, and like Nicaragua, largely unexplored archaeologically. One Honduras site which had already been visited by Stephens--Copán--happened to be near the temporary location of the Honduras government in the summer of 1853. After talking with Cabañas in Santa Rosa Squier visited Copán briefly as he made his way by muleback to El Salvador. His observations on this important site, published in Notes on Central America in 1855, added little to Stephens' detailed account, published fourteen years earlier. Other sites, however, were explored for the first time by Squier. In the Comayagua Valley, an area now recognized as the meeting ground of Maya and Lenca cultures, Squier discovered the remains of several aboriginal cities whose existence had long been forgotten.

²⁸S. K. Lothrop, "The Stone Statues of Nicaragua," American Anthropologist, XXIII, n.s. (July-September, 1921), 311-19.

Most important of the Comayagua Valley ruins were those of Tenampúa, visited by Squier in June, 1853. Squier drew no plans of the 300 to 400 "terraced, truncated pyramids of various sizes," but his description, though brief, was so complete that Bancroft, who relied heavily on Squier in his discussion of Nicaraguan and Honduran antiquities, drew a plan of Tenampúa based on Squier's information.²⁹ Squier concluded that Tenampúa was primarily a religious or ceremonial center and secondarily a defensive site, but he only hinted as to the identity of the builders. According to Squier:

The form of the various mounds at Tenampua precludes the idea that they were used as the foundations of dwellings. It seems quite clear that they were either altars or sites of temples--counterparts of those of Guatemala, Yucatan, and Mexico, and of a large portion of those found in the Mississippi Valley, with all of which they accurately coincide in the principles of their construction.

Fragments of pottery found at Tenampúa were pronounced by Squier to be "identical with those of Palenque and Yucatan." "Some of them," he said, "were exact counterparts of figures in the Dresden MS."³⁰

Later research has shown that Squier was correct in calling Tenampúa a religious and defensive center and not a residential city, but that he probably erred in placing

²⁹E. George Squier, "Ruins of Tenampúa, Honduras, Central America," in Proceedings of the Historical Society of New-York (New York, 1853), 1-8; Bancroft, Native Races, I, 73-77. In the section of Vol. IV, Antiquities, dealing with the archaeology and ethnology of Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador (approximately 90 pages) Bancroft cited Squier on nearly every page. Ibid., IV, 23 ff.

³⁰Squier, "Ruins of Tenampúa," in Proceedings of the Historical Society of New-York, 7.

so much emphasis on resemblances to Maya culture. Dorothy Popenoe, who referred to the Tenampúa article "by the learned and brilliant E. G. Squier" as "the first authentic account of this site," visited Tenampúa in 1928. She agreed with Squier that Tenampúa was primarily a defensive and religious center but she concluded that artifacts found there were not characteristic of Maya culture.³¹ Doris Stone, who has investigated archaeological sites all along the route of the Honduras railway, including the Comayagua Valley, has shown that Tenampúa was influenced by at least three separate cultures. It can be described, she said, as "a combination of Maya, Lenca, and possibly Mexican influence with marked traits of a southern and eastern Central American character." The pottery fragments collected by Squier, she said, were not Maya but of a type found in Nicaragua and Costa Rica.³²

Though writers on Central American archaeology criticize Squier on minor points they agree that he was the first to call attention to the archaeological importance of El Salvador and the Comayagua Valley in Honduras.³³ Squier, thinking in

³¹Dorothy Hughes Popenoe, The Ruins of Tenampúa, Honduras (Washington, 1936). This pamphlet was taken from the Smithsonian Report for 1936, pp. 559-72, and published separately. See also Daniel F. Rubín de la Borbolla and Pedro Rivas, Honduras: Monumentos históricos y arqueológicos (Mexico City, 1953), 24.

³²Stone, The Archaeology of Central and Southern Honduras, 54, 56.

³³"For a long time--and mostly due to the works of E. G. Squier--it has been known that the Comayagua valley is very rich in archaeological sites," wrote Jens Yde, who participated in an archaeological expedition to Honduras in 1935. Jens Yde, An Archaeological Reconnaissance of Northwestern Honduras (Copenhagen, 1938), 82. According to Stone, "Squier . . . made the first scientific reconnaissance of the Comayagua valley." Stone, The Archaeology of Central and Southern

terms of an isolated Maya center surrounded by Indians of low culture, erred in tending to identify outstanding artifacts and monuments on the edges of Maya civilization as Mayan too. Later research has shown that Maya influence in Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador was relatively late and relatively weak; the area Squier explored is more accurately described as the meeting ground of the Maya culture with the civilizations to the south. But in spite of this understandable error, Squier deserves to be recognized as the pioneer archaeologist of the eastern borders of the Maya civilization.

As an ethnologist as well as an archaeologist Squier was as much concerned with the customs of the contemporary Indians and the delineation of their historical boundaries as he was with the artifacts and monuments left by their ancestors. In the places he visited he observed with care how the Indians dressed, worshiped, and lived. He was particularly anxious to compare Central American Indian languages, and he carefully took down as many vocabularies as he could on a form provided him by Albert Gallatin, president of the American Ethnological Society.³⁴ When he returned from visits to Nicaragua, Honduras,

Honduras, 12. Herbert J. Spinden wrote that "Squier seems to have been the first to pay any special attention to the antiquities of the country El Salvador." John M. Longyear, III, added, however, that Squier's reports on El Salvador were "limited to occasional brief notes, he being more concerned with living Indian peoples during his visit." Herbert J. Spinden, "Notes on the Archaeology of Salvador," American Anthropologist, XVII, n.s. (July-September, 1915), 449-50; John M. Longyear, III, Archaeological Investigations in El Salvador ("Memoirs of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University," Vol. IX, No. 2; Cambridge, 1944), 5. The heavy reliance on Squier's writings by such writers as Bancroft, Popenoe, Yde, and Stone is evidence of their high regard for his work.

³⁴Bartlett to Squier, October 23, 1849, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

and El Salvador he had collected a great deal of ethnological information unavailable previously. In his general works Squier attempted to classify the contemporary aboriginal inhabitants of Central America and to delineate boundaries for all the various tribes. His most important ethnological observations, however, were confined primarily to the Indians of the three middle states--Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador.

Squier divided the Indians of Nicaragua into two categories: semi-civilized and savage. The Chorotegans, Cholutecans, Niquirans, and Chontales, all of whom lived on the Pacific side of Nicaragua and all of whom Squier had personally observed, were classed by Squier as semi-civilized; the various tribes on the Mosquito Coast he classed as savage. In "Observations on the Archaeology and Ethnology of Nicaragua" Squier described in detail the appearance, manners, governmental organization, religious practices, and work habits of the Pacific Coast Indians he had observed.³⁵ He took thirty-word samples of the vocabularies of six different tribes, and from at least two Nicaraguan tribes he got much larger samples. Though he was able to give linguistic proof of the Nahuatl origin of the Niquirans and other Nicaraguan tribes, he did not venture any positive conclusions concerning the non-Nahuatl Nicaraguan languages.³⁶ (He did suggest, however, that some

³⁵Squier, "Observations on the Archaeology and Ethnology of Nicaragua," in Transactions of the American Ethnological Society, III (1853), 83-98, 124-58.

³⁶Ibid., 99-119. Squier's linguistic proof of the Nahuatl origin of some of the Nicaraguan tribes was accepted by Cyrus Thomas and John R. Swanton, Indian Languages of Mexico and Central America and their Geographical Distribution (Washington, 1911), 78.

[of the Nicaraguan place names resembled those of Peru.) In Waikna he surveyed, at second hand, the manners of the less advanced coastal tribes.

The Indians of Honduras and El Salvador came under Squier's notice while he explored for the proper route of the Honduras railway in 1853. Although States of Central America contained a brief account of all Central American Indians from Costa Rica to Guatemala, the Indians of the Comayagua Valley in Honduras and of central El Salvador received more extensive and more authoritative treatment. While in Honduras Squier gathered information about the Lenca, Jicaque, and Guajiquero Indians, who had remained more or less remote from the eyes of scientifically minded observers since the Conquest. His writings furnished the first reliable data concerning these Indians. According to Popenoe, "the name Lenca was first applied scientifically" to the inhabitants of the Comayagua Valley "by E. G. Squier."³⁷ "We owe to . . . Mr. E. G. Squier," said an early authority on Indian languages, Daniel G. Brinton, "vocabularies of all four dialects [of the Lenca Indians] and an interesting description of the present condition of the stock."³⁸ Stone, writing in 1957, accepted the boundaries of Lenca culture as drawn by Squier in 1855 with only the suggestion that Lenca territory should be reduced in extent and moved slightly to the eastward.³⁹ Squier's "A Visit to the

³⁷Popenoe, The Ruins of Tenampúa, 571.

³⁸Daniel G. Brinton, The American Race: A Linguistic Classification and Ethnographic Description of the Native Tribes of North and South America (Philadelphia, 1901), 160.

³⁹Stone, The Archaeology of Central and Southern Honduras, 116-17. Writers on the Jicaque Indians claim that

Guajiquero Indians," describing a one-day visit to the Guajiqueros (probably a Lenca tribe) who lived in a remote mountainous region about thirty miles south of Comayagua, is the only extensive nineteenth-century account of those Indians.⁴⁰ A description of a Guajiquero dance witnessed by Squier was reprinted in its entirety by Bancroft in the 1870's and by Stone in 1957.⁴¹

The Pipil Indians of central El Salvador had been recognized by the early Spanish chroniclers as members of the Nahua family, but according to Squier, no precise proof of their Nahua origin had ever been adduced and no accurate boundaries of their territory had ever been drawn. Squier filled in this gap in ethnological data with his "Observations on an Existing Fragment of the Nahuatl, or Pure Mexican Stock in the State of San Salvador, Central America," published in April, 1854.⁴² By getting a Pipil vocabulary and comparing it with an Aztec vocabulary Squier claimed to have provided the proof of the Aztec origin of the Pipil, and by exploring the Pipil country, he claimed to have established the boundaries of the 10,000-square-mile Pipil enclave.

Squier erred in lumping the Jicaques with the Lencas. Victor W. Von Hagen, The Jicaque (Torrupeño) Indians of Honduras ("Indian Notes and Monographs," No. 53; New York, 1943), 74; Edward Conzemius, "The Jicaques of Honduras," International Journal of American Linguistics, II (January, 1923), 163.

⁴⁰E. George Squier, "A Visit to the Guajiquero Indians," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XIX (October, 1859), 602-619.

⁴¹Bancroft, Native Races, I, 737-39; Stone, The Archaeology of Central and Southern Honduras, 10-12.

⁴²E. George Squier, "Observations on an Existing Fragment of the Nahuatl, or Pure Mexican Stock in the State of San Salvador, Central America," New York Tribune, April 13, 1854.

In the early phases of his scholarly career Squier was very much interested in the comparative religions or mythologies of American Indians. Before 1849 he had found time to write three articles on myths and legends of such Indian tribes as the Algonquin and Ojibway, and he was beginning to note similarities in the mythologies of North and South American Indians.⁴³ By 1849 he had marked out for himself an ethnological goal--to help to establish the unity of American Indian culture by showing the similarity of their religious beliefs. As he saw it other scientists were establishing beyond doubt that all American Indians came from the same source and belonged to the same family, despite the unyielding opposition of men who still believed that various migrations from diverse directions were responsible for the presence of man in America. Samuel G. Morton, according to Squier, had shown through his craniological studies that the Indians from Tierra del Fuego to Alaska were of the same physical type. Albert Gallatin and others, according to Squier, had shown through linguistic studies the essential unity of all the American Indian languages. Psychologists were attempting to show that all American Indians had similar personality traits.⁴⁴ Squier's goal was to clinch

⁴³E. George Squier, "Ne-She-Kay-Be-Nais, or the 'Lone Bird': An Ojibway Legend," American Review, II, n.s. (September, 1848), 255-59; E. George Squier, "Manabozho and the Great Serpent: An Algonquin Tradition," ibid. (October, 1848), 392-98; E. George Squier, "Historical and Mythological Traditions of the Algonquins; with a Translation of the 'Walum-Olum,' or Bark Record of the Linni-Lenape," ibid., III, n.s. (February, 1849), 173-93. The latter article, though published in 1849, was written earlier; it was read before the New-York Historical Society in June, 1848.

⁴⁴E. George Squier, "American Ethnology: Being a Summary of Some of the Results which Have Followed the Investigation of this Subject," ibid. (April, 1849), 387-94.

the point by showing that Indian religious beliefs, whether of the Incan, the Mayan, or the Moundbuilder, were essentially the same.

In 1851, just after returning from Nicaragua, he published the fullest statement of his belief in the religious unity of the American Indians in a book called The Serpent Symbol and the Worship of the Reciprocal Principles of Nature in America.⁴⁵ In this book Squier gave numerous examples of the widespread worship of the sun, nature, the phallic symbol, and the serpent symbol by Indians on both American continents. The fact that the sun, nature, and the phallic symbol played such a prominent part in primitive American religions did not seem unusual to Squier. But the widespread worship of the serpent symbol did. The great predominance of the serpent symbol, he believed, tended "to establish a community of origin, or a connection or intercourse of some kind, between the primitive nations of the two continents; for it can hardly be supposed that a strictly arbitrary symbol should accidentally be chosen to express the same ideas and combinations of ideas, by nations of diverse origins and totally disconnected."⁴⁶

To have attempted such a synthesis in 1851 when evidence on Indian religions was scanty was a bold move on the part of Squier, but one which has not won him the acclaim of scholars. Contemporary reviewers praised Squier's impartial presentation of facts but were generally noncommittal as to the validity of

⁴⁵E. George Squier, The Serpent Symbol and the Worship of the Reciprocal Principles of Nature in America (New York, 1851).

⁴⁶Ibid., 254.

Squier's thesis. For example, the reviewer for the London Athenaeum said:

He has proceeded with an enlarged, a liberal, and a learned spirit,--and he has produced a book . . . of much research and displaying extensive general requirements. We have read it with interest, not merely from the novelty of its views, but from the nature of its hitherto unexplored information. We have been traveling over new ground with a new guide.⁴⁷

Modern scholars are inclined to think that Squier overemphasized the serpent symbol and that much more detailed evidence is necessary before a meaningful synthesis of the symbols and myths of New World Indians can be made.⁴⁸

Later, Squier's anthropological interests shifted from primitive religions to languages, and he devoted much time in the 1850's and 1860's to the collection of data concerning Central American Indian languages. Although he was at work at various times on studies of Indian languages only one manuscript, a bibliography, reached the press. In 1861 Squier published Monograph of Authors Who Have Written on the Languages of Central America, and Collected Vocabularies or Composed Works in the Native Dialects of that Country, which, according to Alfred M. Tozzer, "is well known as an excellent

⁴⁷London Athenaeum, No. 1239, July 26, 1851, p. 800; see also reviews in Literary World, No. 222, May 3, 1851 (clipping in Squier Papers, Middle American Research Institute); American Review, X, n.s. (November, 1852), 400; American Journal of Science and Arts, XII, second series (November, 1851), 453.

⁴⁸Daniel G. Brinton, The Myths of the New World: A Treatise on the Symbolism and Mythology of the Red Race of America, (3rd ed. rev.; Philadelphia, 1896), 55-56; George Byron Gordon, "The Serpent Motive in the Ancient Art of Central America and Mexico," in Transactions of the Department of Archaeology, Free Museum of Science and Art (Philadelphia, 1905), 160; Edward H. Brown, "Harvard and the Ohio Mounds," New England Quarterly, XXII (June, 1949), 211; Herbert J. Spinden, Maya Art and Civilization (2d ed. rev.; Indian Hills, Colorado, 1957), 237.

secondhand bibliography."⁴⁹ In the introduction Squier said:

I have here brought together the names of such early, as well as modern authors, who have written on the Languages of Central America, and who have composed works in the native Dialects of the country, with the Titles of their Works, and such Chronological data, and other indications as to their fields of action, or the Convents to which they were attached, as I have been able to collect during ten years of devotion to Central American subjects.⁵⁰

The main part of the bibliography lists 118 authors from Acevedo to Zuñiga who have written on or in the languages of Central American Indians. The brief comments accompanying each entry identify the author, his pertinent works, and the location of the book or manuscript, if known. Inasmuch as Squier himself had not seen all the works listed his comments were frequently secondhand--taken largely from the earlier and more comprehensive work Biblioteca hispano americana setentrional by José Mariano Beristáin y Souza or from such chroniclers as Antonio de Remesal and Francisco Vásquez.⁵¹ In the appendix Squier listed fifty-three authors who had written books and manuscripts "relating wholly or in part to the history, aborigines and antiquities of Central America."⁵²

⁴⁹E. George Squier, Monograph of Authors Who Have Written on the Languages of Central America, and Collected Vocabularies or Composed Works in the Native Dialects of that Country (Albany, 1861); Alfred M. Tozzer, A Maya Grammar: With Bibliography and Appraisalment of the Works Cited ("Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University," Vol. IX; Cambridge, 1921), 156.

⁵⁰Squier, Monograph of Authors, xiv.

⁵¹José Mariano Beristáin y Souza, Biblioteca hispano americana setentrional (2d ed., 3 vols.; Amecameca, 1883). See also Henry Harriase, Bibliotheca Americana Vetustissima: A Description of Works Relating to America Published between the Years 1492 and 1551 (New York, 1866), xl.

⁵²Squier, Monograph of Authors, 55.

In 1861, in the midst of his ethnological inquiries, Squier produced a scientific book (with promotional purposes) wholly different from his previous writings. It was entitled Tropical Fibres: Their Production and Economic Extraction and it contained a complete classification and description of all fibrous plants grown in the tropics.⁵³ The book was born of the prospective scarcity of cotton resulting from the Civil War and the possibility of Central American fibres taking the place of cotton. Though much botanical detail was given Squier laid "little claim to scientific accuracy, either of classification or of expression." He was writing not for botanists but for "practical men of intelligence" with a view of "directing American enterprise to new and profitable fields of exertion."⁵⁴ Squier stated that the numerous fibrous plants of Central America, primarily those of the Agave genus, had not been used before because of the lack of an efficient machine to extract the fibres quickly and easily. With the perfection of a new fibre-extracting machine by George Sanford Squier believed that it would now be economically feasible to produce tropical fibres in Central America commercially. Squier apparently made a useful compilation of facts, but produced nothing of great importance to botanists. The foremost botanist of the United States in 1861, Asa Gray, reviewed Tropical Fibres for the American Journal of Science and Arts:

Although it is true enough that the author in this work can lay but "little claim to scientific accuracy, either of classification or expression,"

⁵³E. George Squier, Tropical Fibres: Their Production and Economic Extraction (New York, 1861).

⁵⁴Ibid., 7.

yet he has here brought together a considerable amount of general information about the principal textile fibres of the tropics and the plants that produce them.⁵⁵

Squier's writings naturally provide the chief means of measuring his achievement as a scholar. One other phase of his scholarly career, however, should not be neglected. Perhaps his greatest contribution to Central American scholarship was not the addition of scraps of knowledge to various branches of learning but his promotion of Central American subjects in scientific societies in Europe and America. Historical, geographical, and anthropological societies all over Europe and America counted Squier among their members. He belonged to nearly every state historical or archaeological society then in existence, and in addition he belonged to such organizations as the Society of Antiquaries of France, the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Denmark, and many others.⁵⁶ At meetings of such societies Squier read papers, presented exhibits of his archaeological collections, and established valuable scientific contacts. He not infrequently distributed copies of his writings and donated pieces from his collections to some of these societies.⁵⁷

⁵⁵American Journal of Science and Arts, XXXIII, second series (January, 1862), 140.

⁵⁶Membership certificates of these and other organizations are in the Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

⁵⁷Many letters in the Squier Papers at the Library of Congress are from scientific societies acknowledging the receipt of gifts from Squier. For instance, John Akerman, secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of London, acknowledged with many thanks the receipt of copies of Volumes I and II of the Transactions of the American Ethnological Society, the Serpent Symbol, and several articles by Squier, John Akerman to Squier, December 12, 1851, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

One society in particular--the American Ethnological Society of New York--was very closely connected with Squier's scholarly career. Albert Gallatin founded the American Ethnological Society in 1842 for the purpose of "collecting and diffusing information on the history of mankind on the Western Continent," and he served as its president until his death in 1849.⁵⁸ Upon Gallatin's death, Squier, who had become a member two years earlier, became the Society's prime mover and most faithful supporter until its demise in the late 1860's. He scarcely missed a single monthly meeting as long as he was in New York. Not only that, in practically every meeting of which reports are available, Squier played a prominent role, either as a speaker, as a contributor of exhibits, or as a commentator.⁵⁹ Although he never attained the presidency, he was corresponding secretary for a number of years and was permanent chairman of the publications committee. He was largely responsible for the publication of the Society's Transactions in 1853 and practically solely responsible for

⁵⁸Bulletin of the American Ethnological Society, May 5, 1860, p. 14. See also Raymond Walters, Jr., Albert Gallatin: Jeffersonian Financier and Diplomat (New York, 1957), 353.

⁵⁹Regular reports of the American Ethnological Society meetings appeared in the Historical Magazine, I-IV (1857-1860), and in the Bulletin of the American Ethnological Society for the years 1860 and 1861. The New York Tribune reported the Society's meetings occasionally. Evidence of Squier's faithful support of the Society is abundantly available in Squier's correspondence. For example, Charles Eliot Norton once told Squier, "I am glad you have got home to bring to light & re-galvanize the Eth. Soc. of which you appear to be the sole member." Norton to Squier, March 26, 1854, Squier Papers, Library of Congress. When abroad Squier was no less consistently in attendance at European scientific society meetings as is revealed in the columns of the London Literary Gazette and of the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

[the publication of the Bulletin of the American Ethnological Society in 1860 and 1861.⁶⁰

The Ethnological Society gradually declined after the Civil War and in 1871 Squier created another organization--the Anthropological Institute of New York--to take its place. The Institute was free of the personal disputes that had plagued the Society, but it too could not stem the tide of post-war intellectual apathy. In addition his failing health and increasing marital difficulties made Squier's task more arduous. As president of the Institute and editor of the organization's Journal Squier was able to keep the organization alive for only approximately a year.⁶¹

Needless to say Squier used these scientific societies, especially the American Ethnological Society and the Anthropological Institute, as a means of promoting Central America. They provided Squier with a convenient means of making influential people aware of the current importance of Central America. The indirect result was of course the promotion of his railway project, a fact to which Squier was not blind. But the scientific societies also provided him with an outlet and an audience for his scholarly work, and there can be no doubt that Squier was genuinely interested in providing the

⁶⁰Historical Magazine, II (May, 1858), 145; ibid., IV (March, 1860), 78-79; Joseph Barnard Davis to Squier, July 28, 1861, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶¹Anthropological Institute of New York (pamphlet announcing an organizational meeting to be held at Squier's house March 9, 1870), Squier Papers, Middle American Research Institute; Journal of the Anthropological Institute of New York, I (March, 1871), 4.

「world with greater and more accurate information concerning
the history, geography, and anthropology of Central America
than it had had in the past.

CHAPTER VII

CENTRAL AMERICANIST

For approximately twenty years, between 1849 and 1870, Squier's principal activities were in some way connected with Central America. The diplomatic appointment as chargé d'affaires to Guatemala in 1849 was the beginning of what Squier hoped would be a scholarly career devoted to study of the aboriginal Americans. But to his surprise he became deeply involved in the rivalry of Great Britain and the United States on the isthmus and had to forego his intended study of the Indians and their monuments. For some time after his diplomatic service was at an end he maintained his awakened interest in the Anglo-American isthmian rivalry and wrote extensively on the problem, justifying his own actions and contending for a more vigorous United States resistance to British pretensions. Meanwhile the lure of making money from the need for an adequate isthmian transportation route led him to the promotion of the Honduras railway project. More writings publicizing Central America (especially Honduras) ensued. With the failure of the railway project by the late 1850's Squier gave up writing as a publicist and found more time to devote to the more satisfying but less financially rewarding task of studying the region's history and pre-

history. "I still stick to Central Am.," he said in 1861.¹ In the remaining years of his active life, with the exception of a brief period as Peruvian claims commissioner from 1863 to 1865, Squier gathered information and documentary materials for the further study of Central America. As long as he continued to work Central American subjects formed part of his publication plans.

Squier's activities had an important effect on the foreign policies of both the United States and Great Britain. His diplomatic mission, along with his numerous writings, helped the United States to extend its influence at the expense of the British. Until 1849 United States diplomacy in Central America was haphazard and futile. Among the incompetent and unfortunate United States diplomatic agents assigned to the region before Squier only one--Elijah Hise--seriously challenged the dominance of Chatfield and the British. But his instructions were so inadequate and his stay so brief that he accomplished nothing. Squier, the most zealous of the early representatives sent by the United States to Central America, was the first to challenge effectively the British position of dominance.

With the appointment of Squier as chargé d'affaires to Guatemala United States foreign policy in Central America turned sharply from apathy to aggressiveness. Doubtless a change was in the offing. The recent acquisitions of territory on the Pacific coast and the necessity of an isthmian transportation route made a stronger policy on the isthmus

¹Squier to Norton, March 23, 1861, Norton Papers, Houghton Library.

inevitable. But both President Taylor and Secretary of State Clayton were conservative men; they did not want to antagonize Great Britain, whose predominance in Central America they well knew. As their representative in Central America Squier went beyond the policies marked out for him in his instructions. His vigorous diplomacy, never completely disavowed, led the administration to a more aggressive policy than it had intended. His speech endorsing the Monroe Doctrine, his ready support of a United States canal company, and his part in the Nicaragua-Costa Rica boundary dispute and the Tigre affair made it appear that the United States was determined to curb British influence on the isthmus, even at the risk of war.

Once at his post Squier moved rapidly. He established friendly relations with Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador by giving them diplomatic support in their controversies with Great Britain and assuring them of the sympathy of his government. He then helped the American Atlantic and Pacific Ship-Canal Company get a favorable contract with Nicaragua and secured a treaty with the same state protecting the canal route and providing for United States control. His most spectacular action was to negotiate for the cession of Tigre Island from Honduras to the United States in the face of Chatfield's prior designs on it.

Squier's performance as a diplomat annoyed the sensibilities of a good many Americans. He was patriotic and energetic, but he was also belligerent, boastful, tactless, ignorant of protocol, and he did not obey his instructions. His duty, he thought, compelled him to act as he did. He believed that

the Secretary of State and the President were uninformed as to the depth of British intrigue and that they had only to know to approve his actions. In view of the slowness of communications he believed that to wait for further word from the State Department would be to court disaster. In the case of the Tigre affair, for instance, he believed he had to act quickly or see the island fall irretrievably to the British. As Squier himself said, "If I have erred, it has been perhaps from too lively a desire to protect the interests and sustain the rights of my country."²

Secretary of State Clayton at times seemed irked with Squier's absence of restraint and his quarrelsomeness. But he found that Squier's unorthodox methods had the desired effect of making it clear to the British that United States interests in the isthmian regions were no longer to be neglected and so he did not disapprove. He praised the zeal with which Squier pursued his mission and disavowed only the most flagrant violations of his instructions, such as the negotiation of the cession of Tigre and Squier's threatening letters to Costa Rica.

One of the important results of the awakened interest of the United States in Central America, symbolized by Squier's mission, was the negotiation of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. The British government in 1850 was faced with two alternatives. It could reach a settlement with Clayton or risk the continuance of a dangerous rivalry on the isthmus. In a few short months Squier had made that rivalry seem unpalatable. He

²Squier to Clayton, December 27, 1849, Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 485.

had taken steps to secure a United States-controlled canal, he had stimulated the antagonism of El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua against Great Britain, and he had lent credence to the belief that the United States was interested in acquiring territorial control of strategic parts of the isthmus. His achievements were enough to make the British realize that it would be impossible to exclude the United States from any form of isthmian transportation. In submitting to the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty the British acknowledged the establishment of United States influence on the isthmus. Squier's activities had done much to make that acknowledgment unavoidable.

After the ratification of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty many Americans were satisfied. Squier was not. Immediately upon retiring from his diplomatic post Squier began to attack the administration for not demanding that the British give up entirely the Mosquito protectorate and even British Honduras. He was the first to attach significance to the British proclamation in 1852 of the creation of the Bay Islands Colony, a move which he considered to be a violation of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. Squier's article on this subject set off the congressional debate of early 1853 on the treaty and on Anglo-American relations generally. The result of the publicity undoubtedly stiffened the incoming Franklin Pierce administration's attitude toward Great Britain in Central America. Throughout the rest of the decade of the 1850's the United States continued to insist that Great Britain comply with the American interpretation of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty and withdraw from the Bay Islands and the Mosquito Coast. Squier's writings in this decade provided much of the information

[upon which United States insistence on British withdrawal was based.³

The policy of the British government was also effected by Squier's work. As a diplomat Squier convinced the British that exclusion of the United States from the isthmus was impossible and that accommodation of the United States was necessary. As a writer he apparently convinced many influential Englishmen of the absurdity of continued support of the Mosquito King which helped make a change in governmental policy possible. As promoter of the Honduras railway project Squier, with the help of William Brown, convinced the British government that it must withdraw from the Bay Islands and the Mosquito protectorate, and furthermore that it should guarantee the protection of the Honduras route.

When negotiations between the United States and Great Britain began in 1856 to find a way for the British to retreat from Central America gracefully, Squier was in London urging the negotiators on. He worked behind the scenes in favor of the Dallas-Clarendon convention, which, had it been ratified, would have provided for gradual British withdrawal from the coasts of Nicaragua and Honduras. When it appeared that the United States was going to refuse to accept it Squier got the president of Honduras to authorize León Alvarado and Víctor Herrán to negotiate directly with the British government. The Honduras-Great Britain convention of 1856, written by

³For instance, Lewis Cass, Secretary of State from 1857 to 1860, once told Squier, "there is a great want of information respecting those Central American regions," and "there is much information I should like to receive from you." Lewis Cass to Squier, December 29, 1853, Squier Papers, Library of Congress.

Lord Clarendon and the two Honduran negotiators, with the acknowledged aid of Squier, also failed. But Squier's constant efforts had well prepared the way for the success of the British treaties with Honduras in 1859 and with Nicaragua in 1860, providing for the return of the Bay Islands to Honduras and the relinquishment of the Mosquito protectorate.

Although, as was natural, the sphere of Squier's greatest influence was in the United States and Great Britain, his career also had important results in Central America. His diplomatic mission encouraged resistance to the British and helped to change the attitude of many Central Americans toward the United States and Great Britain. His promotional activities, which aroused great suspicion from some of the republics and great hope from others, had far-reaching consequences in Central America. His writings, too, had an important, but scarcely measurable, effect on the region.

Squier effected little change in the policies of Guatemala and Costa Rica. Both countries were strongly pro-British when Squier first came to Central America, and they remained so throughout the period of Squier's interest in the region. Squier made no attempt to establish friendly relations with either of the countries during his diplomatic mission, and in fact he attacked them publicly. Squier's tactics, if anything, drove their leaders more completely into the arms of the British than they had been before. Both countries were still highly suspicious of him when he returned in 1853 in behalf of the Honduras Interoceanic Railway Company. They feared the railway project and the introduction of United States commercial influence generally, believing that it

would lead to annexation. Squier's part in helping Cabañas strengthen himself against Conservative resistance and in sponsoring the Barrundia mission to the United States worsened their fears and probably strengthened the pro-British, Conservative element in Guatemala.

In Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador Squier capitalized on anti-British feeling, exacerbated by his stories of British intrigue, and fostered a friendship toward the United States. Squier undoubtedly shored up the sagging Nicaraguan resistance to Great Britain by publicly endorsing the Nicaraguan claim to the San Juan River and by negotiating a treaty recognizing that claim. He thereby strengthened the Liberal government then in power. His effect on later Nicaraguan politics is not so clear. The Gaceta de Guatemala charged that Squier, by strengthening United States influence in Nicaragua, was the precursor of Walker. This interpretation may be correct. Squier's promises of United States aid while he was in the state from 1849 to 1850 and his expressed belief that United States citizens were needed to develop Nicaragua's rich agricultural and mineral resources may have encouraged Liberal politicians to turn to adventurers like Walker to insure their continuance in office.

On the other hand Squier's work in establishing friendly relations between the United States and Nicaragua seems to have been of short duration. To a considerable extent the popularity of the United States in Nicaragua, which was, according to the New York Herald, at a peak during the Squier mission, was due to promises of diplomatic support.⁴ When

⁴New York Herald, August 11, September 3, 1855.

those promises were not fully lived up to, as in the case of Secretary of State Daniel Webster's refusal to back Nicaragua's boundary claims against Costa Rica, much of this popularity was lost. Then came William Walker to obliterate even further the friendly relations Squier had established.

Squier himself, however, did not suffer any corresponding loss of prestige. When he returned to Nicaragua in 1853 he was received with almost as much enthusiasm as in 1849. He had already become the hero of resistance to the British and after he was fired by Webster what the government of the United States did or did not do did not effect him personally. That the United States did not enforce the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty by demanding the withdrawal of the British from the Mosquito Coast was regarded by Squier as a betrayal of his policies, and apparently many Central Americans accepted this reasoning.

The hopes of Honduras and El Salvador for freedom from British interference were also raised by the presence of Squier in Central America in 1849 and 1850. After Squier left, however, Honduras was forced to sign a convention on British claims satisfactory to Chatfield, and El Salvador, under the guns of H.M.S. Gorgon, had to sign a similar arrangement while Squier helplessly seethed in León. Despite these setbacks Honduras and El Salvador were appreciative of Squier's presence as a counterbalance to Chatfield.

On Central American politics as a whole the Squier diplomatic mission was a divisive influence. Although he favored Central American union his policies fostered discord. By taking Nicaragua's side in her boundary quarrel with Costa

[Rica he worsened relations between those two countries. Furthermore his constant attacks on the Conservative régimes in Guatemala and Costa Rica tended to keep alive differences that separated those countries from the rest. And by cultivating the friendship of the three middle states he tended to draw them apart from Costa Rica and Guatemala.]

As the defender of Honduras against the British Squier enjoyed immense personal popularity there. He capitalized on the gratitude of Honduras in 1853 by securing a favorable contract for the construction of an interoceanic transportation route. For the six years following the negotiation of the railway contract with the government of Honduras Squier was primarily a promoter. He did his best to make Honduras a competitor with the Panama and Nicaragua routes. He wrote several Honduras railway reports, lobbied to get treaties protecting the route, and did much of the organization work behind a survey of the route. He failed, however, to get a single mile of the railway built. The chief hindrance to completion of the project was the difficult terrain in Honduras and the consequent expense of constructing a railway there. Squier sanguinely expected to conquer this obstacle with enthusiastic publicity, but hardheaded capitalists refused to risk their money on such an unlikely enterprise.

This promotional aspect of Squier's Central American career is important for two reasons: first, it had a long-lasting effect on Honduras, and second, it reveals in greater depth the personal motivations of his career.

The immediate effect of Squier's promotion of the railway was to strengthen the José Trinidad Cabañas régime in [

Honduras. In return for the contract the railway company gave military and monetary aid to Cabañas, hoping thereby to protect his Liberal government against his Conservative enemies. The company seriously considered sending armed men from the United States to Honduras as well, but ultimately decided not to. The aid given undoubtedly contributed to the maintenance of the Liberal government in power for the next two years, but it also intensified the hostility of Guatemala, then at war with Honduras, and may have helped to bring about Cabañas' ultimate downfall. Guatemala backed a revolution to destroy the "foreign-dominated" Honduras government and by 1856 had succeeded in replacing Cabañas with Santos Guardiola, a Conservative.

Guatemala overturned the Cabañas régime but the idea of the interoceanic railway persisted. Indeed, for the rest of the nineteenth century the Honduras government spent much of its efforts in attempting to complete the project. There are two ways of looking at Squier's implantation of the railway idea in Honduras. (1) He gave Honduras a noble goal which has spurred on her material progress. Or, (2) he gave her an unattainable dream that has caused her serious financial trouble. Hondurans are inclined to accept the former explanation and to honor Squier as Honduras' greatest foreign friend.⁵ But the facts support the latter explanation. Native Hondurans took up the task of railway promotion after Squier's

⁵Rafael Hellodoro Valle, a Honduran writer who referred to Squier as "the great and good friend of Honduras," is an excellent example. Valle, "Ephraim George Squier," Memorias y Revista de la Sociedad Científica "Antonio Alzate," XL (October, 1922), 511.

interest was diverted to other things, but they also ultimately failed. In the process, however, they saddled Honduras with a huge foreign debt which has caused the country much distress. The huge loans of 1867, 1868, and 1870, procured in London and Paris and designed specifically to finance the construction of the railway, remained to deepen the financial problems of twentieth-century Honduran presidents.

The crucial question concerning Squier's promotion of the railway project is his motivation. Was he motivated by a desire to give Honduras and Central America a great future? Or was he motivated by dreams of wealth and power? Both motivations existed. There can be no doubt that Squier became sincerely attached to Central America and its people and wanted to see the area prosper for its own sake. But neither can there be any doubt that the primary reason for his promotional writings was the hope of profit--profit from the Honduras railway company itself or from the sale of lands owned by the company.

One facet of Squier's promotional career sheds light on this question. Squier obviously believed that it was to the best interest of Central America to restrict British commercial influence and to increase that of the United States. The domination of Central America by British merchants he believed to be detrimental to the area's development. Yet when the Honduras railway project did not find favor with United States capitalists Squier's beliefs did not prevent him from seeking capital in Great Britain. Squier was thus willing to foster the extension of British capital, however inimical it might

be to Honduras, so long as it was of personal financial advantage.

Other factors may have entered into Squier's decision to seek foreign capital. He may have thought that the railway itself was of primary importance, no matter where the capital came from. No doubt he also thought that as the chief promoter of the railway and chief agent of the British Honduras Interoceanic Railway Company in New York he could soften the effects of British control. In further explanation of Squier's decision to resort to British capital it might also be said that he did not turn to Great Britain for monetary aid until he had made an all-out effort to make the railway an American enterprise.

Squier did more for Central America as a writer than as a promoter. It is difficult to assess the benefits of Squier's writings accruing to Central America, but in them lie, probably, Squier's greatest contribution to the area. His voluminous writing on various Central American subjects provided countless prospective investors, immigrants, and tourists with more reliable information than any other writer could provide. After the publication of States of Central America in 1858 prospective visitors were told that this was the book to read before setting sail.⁶ Translations of his major works into Spanish, French, and German made his writings available to a wide audience. Spanish translations of his detailed descriptions of topography and climate provided many Central Americans with a better account of their homeland than they

⁶See for example Charles, Honduras: The Land of Great Depths, 82.

could provide themselves.

Some of the information that he imparted was false and misleading. Hoping to attract large numbers of immigrants to Honduras and other parts of Central America, he exaggerated the region's mineral and agricultural resources. Objectivity was not foremost in his mind when he wrote of the Honduras railway cause, for in that case he was a publicist and not a scholar.

Squier's writing reflected a persistent but slackening Anglophobia. The first articles he wrote dealing with Anglo-American relations on the isthmus were filled with invective directed toward Great Britain. Nicaragua, though milder than the articles, scarcely concealed his hatred for Chatfield and the British policy in Central America. Then, after writing Nicaragua, Squier visited England and, despite his writings, was "admitted, at the very outset, into the heart of the first British society." A pleasant holiday at "Grimstone Park, the seat of Lord Lonsborough, one of the first noblemen of England"⁷ probably went a long way in softening his anti-British feelings. In 1855 he was again in England searching for financial support and his Anglophobia underwent further mellowing. Nevertheless in Notes and States he continued to criticize the British maintenance of the Mosquito protectorate. When, at last in the late 1850's, the British relinquished the protectorate Squier was left with little to complain about in that connection.

A second bias pervading Squier's writings on Central

⁷Squier to parents, December 25, 1851, Squier Papers, New-York Historical Society.

American politics was his uncritical endorsement of the Liberal party. Squier did not think of himself as a historian and dealt only cursorily with the political history of the Central American federation and the separate republics. But in his brief treatment of political history he unmistakably revealed a willingness to accept the Liberal interpretation of events in Central American history.

The anti-British, pro-Liberal bias of Squier's writings were serious defects reflecting his personal role in Central American affairs. But most other American writings on Central America in the same period contained the same shortcomings. Squier's prejudiced but authoritative comments undoubtedly helped to create an anti-British interpretation of Central American history which even yet pervades much United States historical literature. Squier's pro-Liberal comments on Central American political history were less important to historiography because his writings on that subject form only a small part of the pro-Liberal literature on Central America, but they probably helped to strengthen the Liberal interpretation.

One of the most remarkable facets of Squier's versatility was his ability to shut off his contentiousness and become a serious-minded scholar. In his writings as a publicist what stands out is his fervor, his optimism, and his prejudices. His more serious writings, on the other hand, show the restraint becoming to a scholar. Two other qualities necessary to a scholar, enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity, Squier had without question. One other ingredient in the makeup of a scholar is dedication, and that Squier did not have.

Throughout his active life Squier maintained his interest in the anthropology of Central America. But it was a broad interest which never centered profoundly on any one thing. He made scientific observations whenever he had the opportunity but his many other activities left him little time to investigate thoroughly what he observed in the field. In Ohio, with the steadying influence of Davis, Squier made extensive measurements of Indian mounds and thus performed a great service to later students. In Central America, burdened with the demands of his diplomatic career, Squier had time, for instance, for only part of one day to study the ruins of the island of Zapatero. This valuable time he spent primarily in procuring one stone idol to be sent back to the United States.

When Squier was in Central America a second time, in 1853, his primary concern was the railway project. Still he found time to visit an out-of-the-way archaeological site, Tenampúa, and write an article in the form of a letter to a friend in New York outlining his discoveries. Tenampúa was probably Squier's most important archaeological discovery and his description of it has frequently been cited by later authors. His Tenampúa article, however, was hastily written at the site and was based on less than two days of exploration and measurement. He did not believe he had the time to stay longer.

Similarly, Squier gathered data on Indian tribes when he had the chance, but spent little time in verifying and consolidating the information he found. The vocabulary of the Guajiquero Indians, regarded as one of Squier's substantial

ethnological contributions, was taken in the course of one evening spent questioning a native Guajiquero. Although Squier was an excellent observer and compiled a great deal of significant data about the Indians of Nicaragua and Honduras, his numerous other activities left him too little time to study and interpret his compilations.

Squier's chief contribution to anthropological scholarship was to direct attention to regions hitherto regarded as of little consequence or disregarded entirely. His writings necessarily dwelt on the areas with which he was most familiar--Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. Since these areas still have not been explored as extensively as the more significant archaeological sites to the north Squier's writings have come to the attention of only a few scholars. Scholars who have gone over the ground Squier covered acknowledge Squier's pioneering work, and only complain that he was inclined to place too much emphasis on the similarities of the Indian remains of Honduras and Nicaragua with those of the central Maya civilization.

Probably the most important contribution Squier made to Central America was to make the region better known, not only to foreigners but to natives as well. Central Americans place much emphasis on this aspect of Squier's career. For instance, one Central American admirer called Squier's book on Honduras "the richest present that could have been made to Central America and especially to Honduras."⁸ But not only Honduras benefited. Squier's writings covered all parts of

⁸Squier, Honduras (Spanish translation) (Tegucigalpa, 1908), prologue by the translator, viii.

Central America from Guatemala to Costa Rica and all aspects of Central America from its prehistory to its future. And the information that he imparted was for the most part reliable. "In the zenith of his existence," said Heliodoro Valle, Squier "was the most respected authority on Central American subjects, past as well as contemporary."⁹ According to a Harper's reviewer in 1858, "Mr. Squier is certainly the highest living authority on the geography, statistics, and political condition of Central America."¹⁰

No other writer before Bancroft contributed so much varied information about the whole of Central America. Other writers, such as John L. Stephens, Frederick Crowe, and William V. Wells, may have described certain aspects of Central American life more adequately, but none compiled so much information on so many subjects. Squier was the only one of these writers who could be called a Central Americanist. In Central America he sought to further the interests of his country, in Central America he sought to make a profit, and in Central America he sought to satisfy his scholarly bent. As a result the region was far better known at the close of his career than it was in the beginning.

⁹Rafael Heliodoro Valle, "George Ephraim [sic] Squier," Hispanic American Historical Review, V (November, 1922), 778.

¹⁰Review of States of Central America, Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XVII (October, 1858), 693.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Charles L. Stansifer was born December 13, 1930 in Garden City, Kansas. He went to schools in Wichita and Garden Plain, Kansas, graduating from Garden Plain High School in 1948. He attended Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas for two years, then transferred to Wichita University, where he received his B.A. degree (in Spanish) in 1953 and his M.A. degree (in history) in 1954. In September, 1954, he was awarded a fellowship to Tulane University and began work on the Ph.D. degree in the field of Latin American history. From 1955 to 1958 he was editorial assistant on the Mississippi Valley Historical Review. In September, 1958, he accepted a position as Assistant Professor of History at Southwestern Louisiana Institute, Lafayette, Louisiana.